

BELONG

magazine

the art + community of blogging, social media + entrepreneurship

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ISSUE THREE
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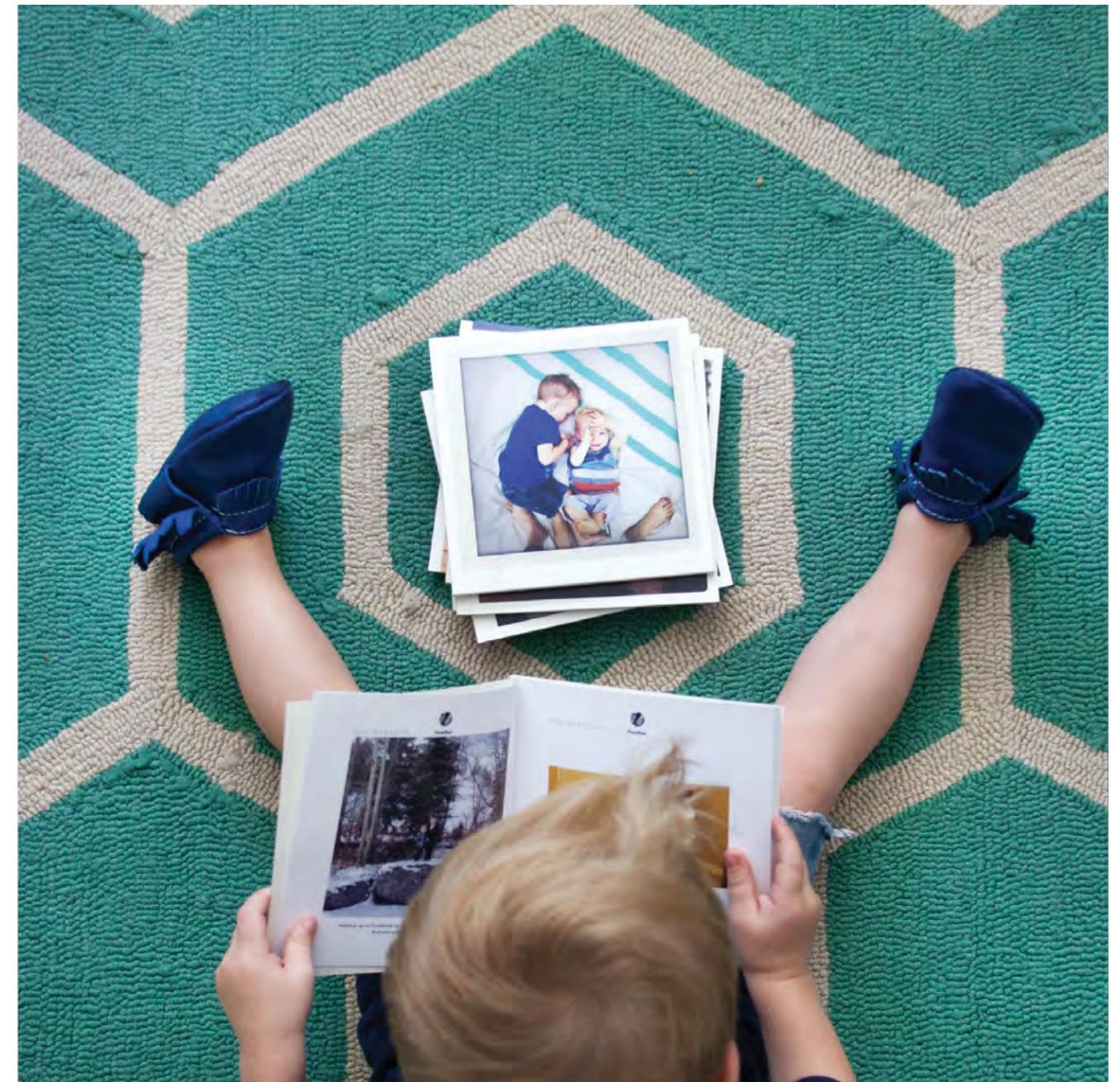
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You Are Enough



Brooke Saxon-Spencer
founder + editor

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FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

Motivational quotes and inspiration coming at me like stars falling from the sky. Instagram and pinterst are veritable galaxy of these quotes. They are so happy and pretty, and every once in awhile, I catch one and put it into a proverbial jar upon which to gaze and sigh at its affect and beauty.

“You are enough” is one of my canned favorites (catch the pun?). It’s bold and empowering. It’s determined and confident. And it’s true! I am enough just being who I was uniquely made to be. I don’t need to feel inadequate or incapable. I don’t need to strive to be something “more” or different. I don’t need validation to prove my worth. I am valuable. I am enough.

Does it sound like I’m giving myself a pep talk? Sometimes, that’s exactly what I need. I often don’t feel like I’m enough. In time, the vibrancy of those captured words lose their shimmer in their jar, and they get pushed to the back of the shelf. I forget and then I feel panic and inadequacy seep in through the seals. Even though the words were never more true.

I want the words “you are enough” to be fresh and powerful for you. This is why they are at the center of this issue. Several of the articles in this issue also speak to this: stop chasing perfection, know that you have unique, creative gifts and don’t hide your ideas as they matter and make a difference in the world. You are enough. Know that and believe it. Don’t let your self-doubt keep you trapped or your fears of inadequacy keep your dreams on the shelf. Let them sparkle that they might inspire others. Let them shine that they might brighten the world around you.

Brooke Saxon-Spencer



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BELONG MAGAZINE / ISSUE THREE

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／ Our Mission

Belong Magazine is designed to celebrate the art and community of blogging, social media and entrepreneurship

In all that we do, our mission is to inspire women to use their passions for a purpose in creating and sharing authentic words, images, ideas and experiences virtually and off-line and to be life-giving and encouraging to others.

It is our desire for women to know that they are enough, their voice matters, and that they have a place.

They belong. YOU BELONG.



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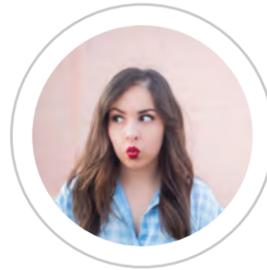
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Deluxmodern Design
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Hello  World
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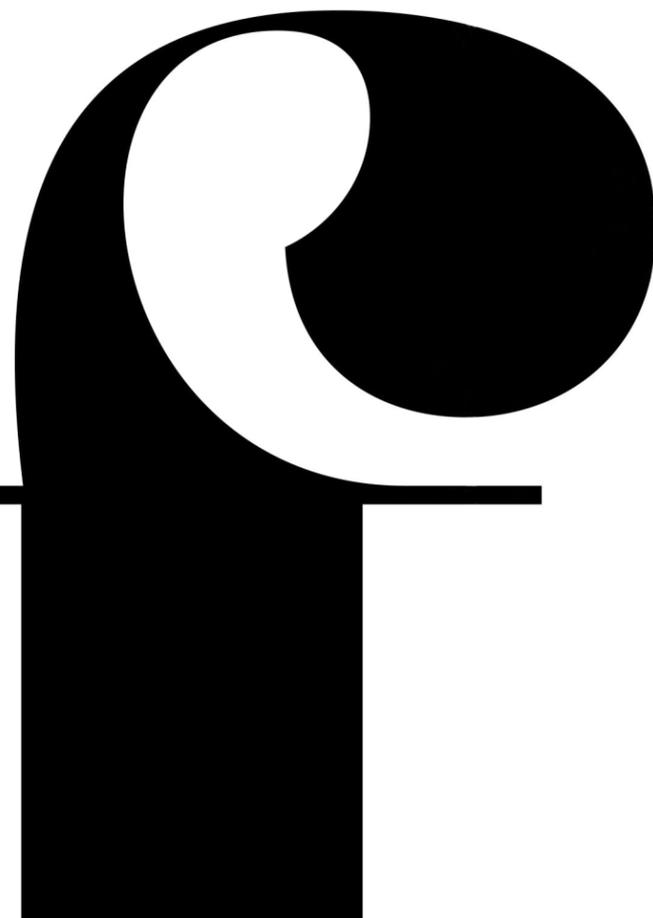


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The Everyday Napkin - Signature 7"
\$5.75/ea + up
The Everyday Napkin
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for creative businesses
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annetestepanian.com



Featured Finds

More of the odds and ends we've been loving from all over the web.



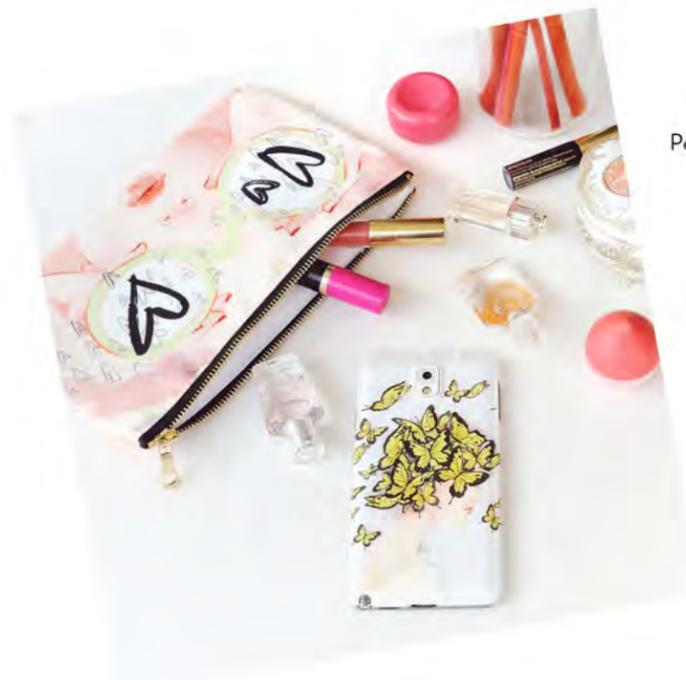
Custom Personalized Stationery
\$27/set of 12
Tone and State
www.toneandstate.etsy.com



'I've Got It Together' Notepad Set
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Full Apron
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Belong Goodies

It's All About the Image

6 TIPS FOR STYLING AND CAPTURING IMAGES TO CONNECT, GROW AND MAKE THE SALE ONLINE



Megan Martin
Megan Martin Creative

Megan Martin is the Owner and Creative Director of Megan Martin Creative, a full service design firm specializing in powerful branding for creative entrepreneurs, social media consulting, and prop styling for stunning brand imagery. Before solely focusing on branding, marketing and targeted social growth, Megan was a wedding planner for five years in the North Florida market and understands the heart and work that goes into building a small creative business from the ground up. The MMC team believes in intentional branding that speaks to the heart of your business mission and ideal client so you can confidently make the sale with authenticity.

In the world of blogging and social media, creating fresh and compelling content is king. And beautiful imagery is queen! Your ideas, thoughts, products and services are important and to connect them with today's visual world of digital marketing (hello, Instagram!) it is crucial to learn how to be present with your audience regularly through artfully presenting your content.

Sounds daunting, right? Well I am here to tell you it can be done and you really don't need a ton of fancy equipment to make it happen! In fact if you have a phone with a camera that is a perfect place to start! To begin styling and capturing consistently branded images I am going to walk you through my Top 6 Tips that I use every day. So pull out your phone and let's get to work!

1. FIND THE RIGHT LIGHT.

This first tip is quite possibly the most important in the art of creating images. Depending on your brand aesthetic, you have to choose what sort of lighting you want to style your images in. If you have a more masculine, moody, or woodsy inspired visual identity, you might want to intentionally keep your lighting low to convey that, but for the most part, I side with the statistics. Based on a study done by Curalate, images with high lightness generate 24% more engagement (curalate.com). So before you even begin to set the scene, you need to find a spot to capture your images with the best lighting, which can be done for free with some good ole sunshine!

The key to naturally lit photographs is shooting in even light. To get to what is even, I will explain

PHOTOGRAPHY RED OCTOBER PHOTOGRAPHY

what isn't even. Imagine you are next to a tree with the sun shining brightly and no clouds in sight. You are in the shadow of the tree to stay cool. Now look at the ground. See that shadow and how you can see bits of bright sunlight peeking through in lots of little spots around the shadows of the leaves? That is uneven light. A mix of shadow and light. Now this is an extreme example, but the point is you want to find a fully covered spot so that your images aren't blown out from bright sunlight or spotty from uneven shadows. When you are shooting images, look out for even lighting and coloring. If one side of your screen looks darker and harsher than the other, you don't have even light. If the elements in your pictures (products, people, objects, etc) are creating large shadows, either shift what you are taking the picture on or move to another location. Slight shadows are natural and create a little depth, but it's the dark and prominent shadows you want to look out for.

2. PICK YOUR BACKGROUND.

You know those social bosses you follow that always deliver images on a bright white background? Shhhhh, I'm going to let you in on a little styling secret: You can make this happen with poster boards! That's right my friend. You don't have to remodel your whole house to look like a museum, and you can finally put all those elementary school projects to use in your adult life! If you love the crisp look of an all-white background, pick up a few foam core boards from your local office supply store. If you are like me and want a little more color in your life, you can pick up assorted colored poster boards or large sheets of frame matting from any craft or art supply shop. If you are looking for even more interest in your background, use a pattern! Marble is having a moment and sure you could get a slab sent to your door, but that would be pretty heavy. Try marble contact paper! Wrapping paper is another great option for a patterned look that won't break the bank!

3. CURATE A BRANDED PROP BOX.

To present your content, message and products in a way that visually blends with your brand aesthetic, I suggest curating a collection of props that can be used to style various images. Start by looking for items that coordinate with your brand color palette and style. The sky is the limit for what props you can find to convey any given message! In my collection, I have assorted items you may find on a desktop like a gold stapler, patterned pens, and paper accessories. I use these when I want to talk about what is going on behind the scenes in our office or to highlight our stationery line. Flowers are always a good idea to include in your images, but if you don't have fresh buds around or the budget to get them regularly, you can have a fellow creative create a faux paper arrangement to compliment your brand. Also be sure

to include your print collateral! You already spent time and money designing items like your business cards, branded stationery, services guide, and etc., and they make a great little prop to style with!

4. FRAME YOUR IMAGE.

If you are styling for your blog and know you need a vertical image that can easily be pinned to Pinterest or you want to show it off in square form to your followers on Instagram, frame your image accordingly before you shoot! Framing will ensure all the elements in your image look their best in proportion to the final image size you need. If you are using your phone to capture your image, go ahead and change your frame to the appropriate mode before snapping the picture.

5. TWEAK THE EXPOSURE.

Or the brightness of your image. If you have a newer iPhone, you can do this by tapping on the spot you want to focus on and sliding up or down on the sun icon that appears. For other phones, simply tap the darkest area of your frame. This will immediately up the brightness of the image. Sometimes it makes the image way too bright, so just tap a little closer to a brighter portion of the frame. It is a little game of trial and error, but once you do it a couple times, it will become second nature. If I have learned anything from my photographer friends, it is to shoot your image correctly before you go to post processing (editing) and your images will look much better in the end!

6. EDIT YOUR IMAGE FOR THE FINAL TOUCH!

There are a handful of great editing apps available to polish your images for the final touch. For iPhone users, I love the easy and effective app, Pic Tap Go (head to meganmartin.net/prettyphonepics for a step by step tutorial!). Android users can utilize apps like Afterlight and VSCO cam. When editing your images, keep it consistent and use the same filters every time so your images look cohesive.

If you follow these 6 tips consistently, you will quickly start to produce better quality images that visually convey your content for higher engagement and confident sales. Whether styling your products or a simple scene to talk about what you've been up to, delivering consistent and cohesive beautiful imagery will foster brand awareness and show your audience why what you do matters! Tag me @ [meganmartincreative](https://www.instagram.com/meganmartincreative) on Instagram to show me what you're creating and I'll cheer you on! 🍷

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How I Accidentally Quit My Job & Became a CEO

P.S.

HOW YOU CAN, TOO!



Allison Evelyn Gower

Allison Evelyn Gower is the founder of AllisonEvelyn.com. As the CEO of her own business, she writes, blogs, does PR and social media for a variety of local and global clients. At AllisonEvelyn.com, she shows inspiring "what if"-ers to leave 9-5 and go freelance. This online hub is for finding your passion, working smarter and freelancing to have your ideal life. Because, let's be real, have you ever thought... what if?

Whether you've slipped on a banana peel or tripped on a busy sidewalk, we've all had accidents. In 2013, a very different sort of accident happened to me—I ended up on a path that led to quitting my job and becoming a CEO. Even if you don't imagine owning a business one day, it's time to pull a Justin Bieber and **never say never**.

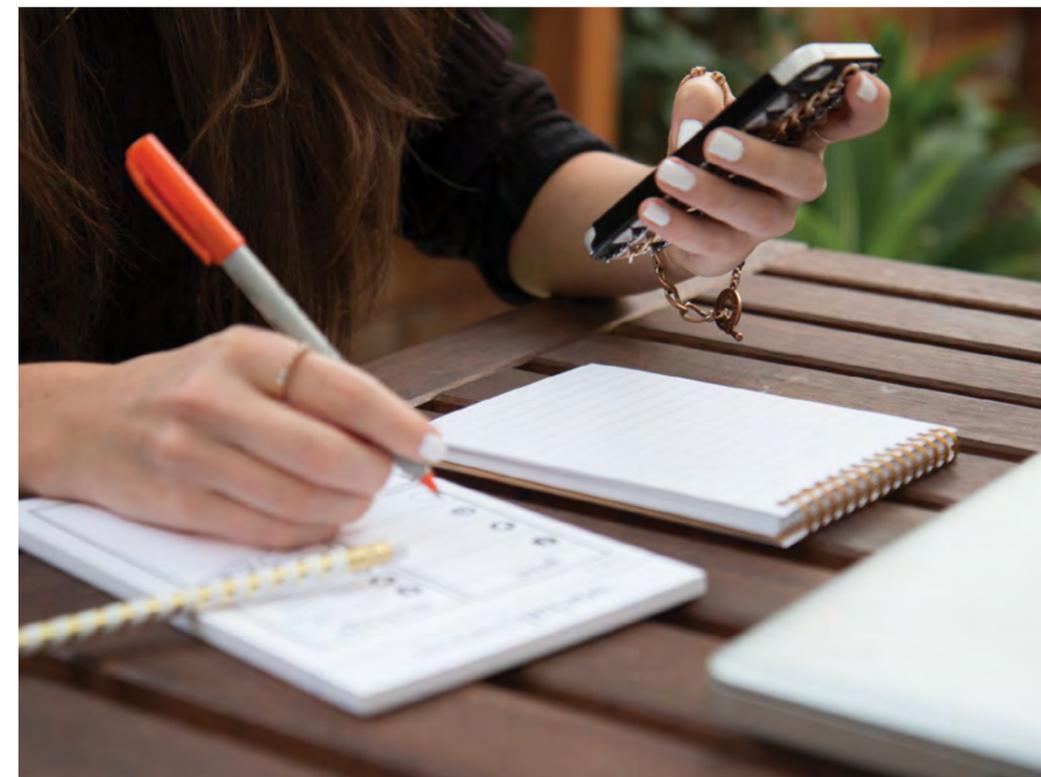
If you're reading *Belong Magazine*, it's because you're a lady boss who is ambitious and driven. Though I've always been a motivated hustler myself, I'd never had the goal of starting a company. Then, something happened...

It all started in downtown San Diego, when I was the marketing director at a commercial production

company. Besides heading up outreach and marketing, I did a wide variety of work like creating project budgets, draft proposals and coordinating shoots. Anyone who has worked at a small company will understand this "wearing of many hats" well.

While we don't always know it at the time, we often acquire skills and knowledge that unexpectedly helps us in the future. Whether I was managing 5 figure projects, interviewing potential employees or cake decorating (yes, cake decorating), I didn't realize I'd be using these skills to run a business later (or become so obsessed with icing design.)

Amidst so many activities, I began to reflect on which tasks were my favorites. When I woke up each



morning, what part of my work day was I most excited about? What is it for you? For me, it was the content. Whether it was writing a new blog post or creating a pitch for an advertising agency, I thrived on learning about the brand or topic and crafting the perfect message through words, images and design.

It was a major epiphany: I wanted to be a copywriter. Or something of that sort, at least.

Shortly after that, a copywriter told me how he got his start, Craigslist. He suggested I try it out—find a writing gig to gain more experience and see how I liked it. After a few days of refreshing the Craigslist Writing Gigs page, I found an ideal prospect, VisitPB.com - a local neighborhood website wanting to do a weekly blog on all the happenings of San Diego's Pacific Beach area. I already lived in the area and knew Pacific Beach well (In general, this is a great way to start freelancing. Pick a local neighborhood spot and, if they're not posting for help, reach out to them and offer your services). **If you don't ask, you don't get. The worst any person or company can say is no.**

After submitting my resume and writing samples, I got the gig. I began working my full-time job at the production company by day and crafting blogs for VisitPB.com during the evening

and weekend. It was a lot of work to manage both a full-time career and a part-time gig, however, I found myself happy to make it work. **If you're truly passionate about something, you're more than willing to put in the time. When you zone out and don't care that you're on your tenth hour of work, you know you're doing what you love.**

It was 8 months into this work-packed life that I received an email from my Visit PB.com client. Together, his business partner and he owned 4 businesses and needed ample amounts of content. My client told his business partner about me, referencing my quality of work and hard fast attention to deadlines. After reviewing my samples and a meeting at a favorite coffee shop, they made an offer: If I was interested in going freelance, they'd give me enough work for at least 6 months to launch my freelance career.

This out-of-the-blue offer had me stunned. It had me considering leaving the safety of a stable paycheck for a life of typing away in coffee shops. Could I really do it?

After the many pros and cons lists, there was one point that truly resonated with me: will I regret it if I don't take this chance?

It made me realize that I could only regret NOT making the leap. Even if I found that freelance life

PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX DRACHNIK



／ If you're truly passionate about something, you're more than willing to put in the time.

wasn't for me, I could always go back to the 9-5 world. With that, I negotiated the contracts (**never freelance without a contract!**), quit my 9-5 job and began freelancing.

I won't say the path after that was easy. I didn't yet understand the level of accounting I'd be doing or how lonely it'd be working from coffee shops. There are struggles in any type of career, even for a freelancer who can blog remotely in Denmark by morning so she can bike the streets of Copenhagen in the afternoon (oh, and eat gelato... don't forget the gelato).

The most important thing is to NEVER SETTLE. Working out of coffee shops everyday lacked a supportive community and the comforting routine of everyday life, so I sought out a solution. That's when I joined a co-working space. These are spaces where freelancers, small business owners and anyone else looking for a communal space can pay a fee to work and collaborate in an open space. *(If you're interested in finding one near you, simply Google the name of your city and the words co-working space.)*

In order to become the head of a business, I learned how crucial it is to NOT go it alone. In those first few months at coffee shops, isolation stunted my growth. By surrounding myself with other ambitious people innovating and creating their own story, I was motivated to truly launch my business forward. It also led me to new clients and events ideal for

connecting with other entrepreneurs, solopreneurs and creatives.

It was working out of the co-working space I realized I wasn't a starving artist hopping from gig to gig. Through forming connections and learning from others, I'd formed a solid business. After a meeting with my accountant, it turned out it was time to go from being a 1099 freelancer to a formal business. That's when I filed for an S-Corporation and met with the lovely folks at my bank for a new business account.

And, yes, forming an S-Corporation makes you the CEO and President of a company.

Since my business officially formed, it's been an adrenaline-pumped time of referrals, networking and fearless outreach. The result has been having a business of return clients and experiencing something new everyday.

At first, when people asked what I did, it felt odd to say yes, I am a CEO and yes, I am only 23 years old. Thankfully, with increasingly adventurous leaps and client experience, we grow confidence. Now, I say that I own my own business with total self assurance.

Although I didn't set out to launch a business, perhaps it wasn't an accident. I was unknowingly creating the path toward become a CEO the whole time.

Here are the main steps that put me on the path to becoming a CEO. You can do these too:

- / Practice self-reflection to discover: "What are my skills? What makes me zone out so much that I lose track of time?"
- / Once those dreams and goals have been realized, define and pursue them.
- / Take a leap, even if it feels scary because, hey, we can always go back to our old ways.
- / Make connections and build community with other like-minded people. Two heads really are better than one... especially when you're trying to learn how to set up a business (here's where I must thank my accountant—the best investment I ever made!)

You don't have to be a writer, blogger, social media maven and PR lass like me to have this path. You could be an aspiring graphic designer, baker or a professional hedgehog trainer.

No matter your dream, follow those basic steps to figure out what it is you love to do, pinpoint a goal and go for it. You could very well become an "accidental CEO" yourself. 🍷

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How Imperfection and Failure Can Help You Find Your Yes



Reese Evans

Reese Evans is the founder of yes supply co. an online community giving creatives inspiration, mentorship and entrepreneurship advice to build their yes supply life, blog and business.

When I think back to the days when I worked in a job I wasn't passionate about, I see that they were some of the emptiest days of my life. I would cry in the shower as I was getting ready; I would feel so much anxiety on the way to work some days that I thought I was going to throw up. I could feel the creative passions I held so dear, like writing and drawing, start to dissipate and fade as I had no creative outlet to which to dedicate them..

The money was pretty good, and that is something that I am grateful for. It allowed me to put my hard-earned cash into some meaningful investments. But while I was there, I worked so much that I didn't have time to spend it. I didn't have a chance to live my life, see my friends, make family birthdays and enjoy so much of life.

I knew I was capable of doing so much more than selling expensive blouses to people who really

didn't need another shirt, but I didn't know what to do. I knew what I LIKED doing, but I didn't know if I was capable of turning an income from it. I had found success being a fashion stylist but not enough to cover my bills, which was what led me back into working full-time in the first place. Although I liked the creativity of styling, I felt I needed something more emotionally fulfilling.

I felt like I just wanted someone to take my hand and show me the steps to take to be the happiest version of myself. I knew that I could put the work in, I just needed some help on deciding what path to take.

I was chatting with a former colleague who said that he had a mentor who helped him rise through the ranks at his positions at work and who took his hand and gave him guidance. He continued on to say that it was rare that he saw these types of

When you push yourself to be uncomfortable, try new things and give yourself the opportunity to fail, you give yourself the chance to discover who you want to be.

relationships with women, and it seemed so much harder to achieve. Are young women not reaching out to ask for mentorship? Are experienced women forgetting where they came from, and that the lost career-girl of today needs to feel a little less alone? Mentorship could help so many women move up in their careers and establish a sense of direction in their lives—I know it could have helped me.

I created yes supply co. so that no one has to feel that feeling again. It's a place where people who have found their 'yes' can give direction to those who want to follow in their footsteps.

If you love working the typical grind, more power to you. But if you're looking for ways to transition your past skills into a new career that gets you fired up, or looking to turn your passion and purpose into your livelihood, you CAN do it, like so many women before you.

There are a few keys to switching gears and starting the life that deep down, you know you deserve. As cliché as it is, you only live once, so live life with fire in your soul and work toward doing the things that align with your purpose.

PREPARE YOURSELF: IT'S NOT ALWAYS GOING TO BE EASY.

I like to compare success and achieving goals to going to the gym. If you're doing your make-up before you go to the gym, ensuring your Lululemons are color coordinating and only switching between level 5 on the elliptical and speed 4 on the treadmill you're probably not pushing yourself too hard at the gym. You're sticking within the confines of what you know you can accomplish; you're not pushing your limits. No matter what your goals are, if you don't push yourself, you're going to stay at about the same level of health and fitness.

If you go to the gym and you run as hard as you can, you challenge yourself to transition from the 5 lb to the 10 lb then up to the 15 lb dumbbells, you've stretched yourself past what you think your limits are. If you break a sweat and run out of breath, you

are getting OUTSIDE of your comfort zone. This is how your muscles grow. They have to be pushed further than their limits to gain definition. ***This is how you grow closer to your goals, too.***

Success can get messy. Yes, you'll get sweaty. You may even pass out on the Stairmaster, but you'll grow. When you push yourself to be uncomfortable, try new things and give yourself the opportunity to fail, you give yourself the chance to discover who you want to be.

REMEMBER WHY YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE IT.

The most important thing before setting your goals and intentions is to look inside yourself and discover WHY you want to achieve the thing(s) you are after.

With distractions like instagram, facebook and tumblr it's so easy to imagine that that every pretty smiling face you double tap is happy as ever in their career as a model, influencer, foodie, fitness coach or whatever else is trending. But if you are going after a career choice for the end result of just free clothes and hundreds of likes, and not the why attached to it, you're sure to burn out quick. It makes it even harder when we're being marketed to everywhere we turn to "start an online business" or "become a fashion blogger" with promises of overnight success.

A good 'why' for going after something is the feeling you get inside when you accomplish your goal. Do you want the happiness that goes hand-in-hand when you truly help people? Do you want to offer them a product that will make their lives easier? Do you want the satisfaction of knowing you've changed someone's life? That is a feeling that will keep you grounded even on the darkest of days and stop you from giving up.

I know from experience, and from the people that I've interviewed, that the reason you find success isn't because you're handed the world on a silver platter or because of luck. It's the people who don't give up when they get told 'no', who stick to their belief system and their vision that end up finding their yes.

Need help finding your why? Think about the goal what you want to achieve... I'll give you a couple of seconds. Okay, done? Perfect. Now, think about HOW you are going to feel inside when you achieve it. That is the key. Will you feel accomplished? Proud? Gratitude? Start generating those feelings now and doing things that make you feel like that TODAY and, little by little, you'll move closer to achieving your goal. If the feeling isn't something you quite click with, think harder about what your true purpose is.

SET GOALS, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, REMINDERS.

Now that you know your why and what you want to achieve in your success, setting goals is such an

important step. You should make a long term goal (like starting your own business), but also small, measurable goals that will move you closer to it. Examples can be starting your own website, building a social media following, sourcing products to sell and so on. Set deadlines for these goals to help you incrementally move towards your long term goal.

Lastly, remind yourself to continue to work forward or these goals can fade into the abyss. I like to put my goals in a visible area, like in my office space, so I see them everyday. This way I am less likely to forget to work on them. I set reminders on my phone for important tasks like writing articles or reaching out to certain people to grow my network.

Habits are stronger than any to-do list so consider creating a weekly schedule with specific times to check off the things you need to do. This will get you into a process of getting things done every week without fail. You'll soon fall into a routine of maximizing your spare time into spurts of creativity and productivity, and your dreams will begin to become a reality.

FORGET PERFECT.

Please, whoever invented that word should just crawl into a hole and... well they probably already did. But really, the idea of 'perfection' has plagued women-kind for far too long.

Perfect is subjective. And, really, perfect is non-existent. When you release yourself from the idea of perfect and re-align yourself with the understanding that everything is in a state of innovation, movement and change, you begin to move forward with things you wish to accomplish. You lose the fear of perfect.

Think of the last app you used on your phone. Let's use Instagram as an example, because I know you are scrolling as you read this article. I also know you're wondering why your crush commented on your last picture, but didn't like it. #rude

When you first downloaded Instagram, it was for selfies and letting your friends know what you had for lunch. It was far from perfect. But they released it into the world. We spoke up. It needed more share buttons, it needed a video function, more filters, the ability to upload landscape pictures and advertising options. And look at Instagram now. It's adapting, growing and evolving, and it's not done yet.

If they waited to release Instagram until they figured out all of those features when they launched it, they would probably still be working on it.

What are you still working on? What are you trying to get all perfect before you release it into the world? Ask a friend, get some feedback and put what you've got out into the world. You'll start to move toward your dreams because the thing that you have imagined will start to become real.

That feeling of knowing how to do everything, feeling 100% confident with every choice you make

and feeling ready to do everything does not exist. Stop waiting until you feel ready to get started. That first time you start to write your first blog article or post a picture, you'll feel unsure. The more you allow yourself to put your work out there, the more you'll give yourself the opportunity to grow and get better.

HELL, YES! FAILURE.

The first time I realized that failure was a good thing, was when I got a job I loved. My first 9-5, my first big girl job. I had been dreaming, manifesting, hoping, praying and crying for it for years. I had interviewed at multiple places and, for whatever reason, from not 'being the right fit' to asking for too much money, I didn't get the job. Until this place.

I walked in, and it was really all it was cracked up to be. People were funny and laid back, I was doing work that I found fulfilling, I had work-life balance and I had weekends off.

I realized that I HAD to go through all of those annoying interviews that went no where... they were practice and preparation to nail the job that was really right for me.

So, understand that just like 'perfect' is an imperfect word, so is failure. Interpret this word as a learning experience, a stepping stone, a chance to get better. The more you go through failure and adversity, the stronger you'll get.

CELEBRATE THE WINS.

Girl, you're working so hard. You're staying in on weekends, getting up at 5 in the morning to work on your blog and starting to see some traffic. Celebrate it. Throw yourself a little dance party when you get a great comment on a post or an email praising your work. Spend some of the money of your first sale on an outfit you've been eyeing. Share with a friend the small wins that happen.

The joy you get from these little wins will expand and create opportunities for even more great things to come into your life. You'll get an understanding of what is working for you. When you celebrate, you remember why you are working so hard and remind yourself that this is more than just a grind, it's working toward doing what you love.

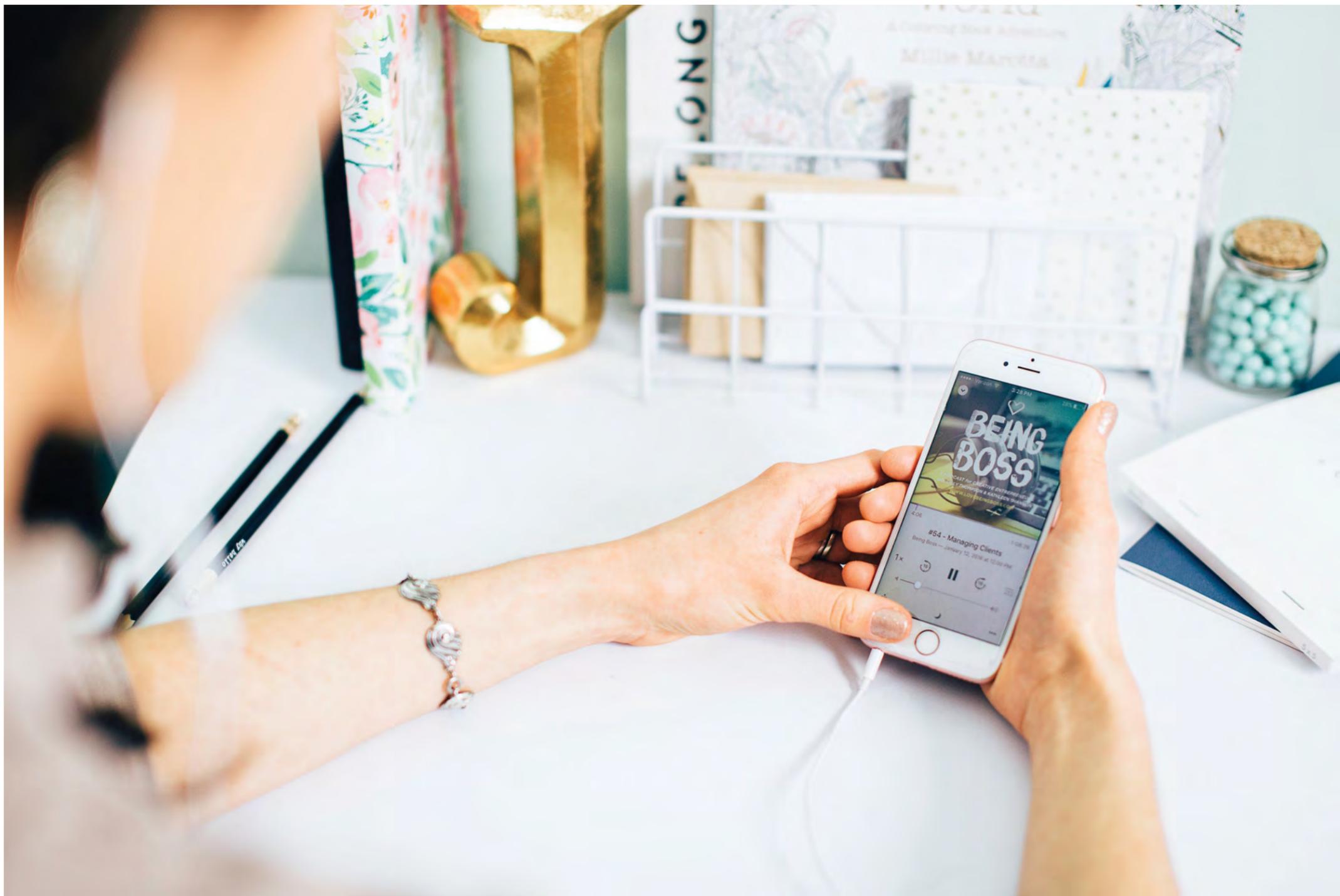
You can make it, but like so many before you, it's not always going to be easy. If you have a mission to change the world, spread positivity or help people in their own lives while also creating a life where you can be financially stable, know that you can achieve it. You just have to believe that you can, be willing to put in the time and maybe even go through a few failures before you get to your yes. ☺

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WITH EXPERTS CATHY OLSON, PAIGE RAY, ASIA CROSON AND PAIGE POPPE

EVERYTHING YOU
NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

PERISCOPE, PODCASTS & SNAPCHAT



PHOTOS ALYSSA JOY PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN

ALL ABOUT

PERISCOPE



Cathy Olson, Love-Inspired

Cathy Olson is a wife, mom of 2 girls, a Southern Californian and a believer in loving people with everything you've got. Cathy has been a professional designer for 15 years, working with multimillion dollar brands (Costco, Best Buy & Disney to name a few) - and opened her own business Love-Inspired, 7 years ago to help small businesses find THEIR voice. She works with creative professionals both nationally and internationally and has designed and launched hundreds of successful brands. Cathy has an intense love and passion for small creative businesses and shares her experiences, teaches and shares tips for creative businesses. Cathy encourages others to focus on what matters, follow your passions, and make it count.

Cathy has 2 major goals in life - creating beautiful design, and encouraging amazing people & brands. She helps create beautiful, easy to navigate, and thoughtful websites that speak the language of love, talent and creativity. Cathy believes in the power of kindness and authenticity to make people smile. She believes the littlest details matter when making a brand truly connect with dream clients.

Periscope is all about connection. More specifically, simulating human connection through engagement and sharing. It's reality TV without the producers, the writers and (let's face it, a lot of times) the actors. It connects you to the world and the world to you. There are viewers and there are broadcasters, and a lot of us are both. Periscope is a live streaming app used from your mobile device. Broadcasts can be used with limited interaction via the web and Twitter; however, it is meant to be a mobile experience.

A few fun facts: the Periscope company was purchased by Twitter right before its release in March 2015. Periscope is the fastest growing social media platform of all time. It hit 10 million users in just four months. Now before you start feeling like you're behind the curve—fear not. When it comes to the place that Periscope has in the technology adoption curve, it is still in the innovator phase—that's the phase even before early adopter. So not only are you not behind but you actually have the unique chance to become a maven in a social media platform that is quickly changing the face of social media. Were you on Facebook when it first started? Or Instagram? Probably not. It's an exciting opportunity to be on an emerging platform, blazing trails as you go. Or as 'Scopers' like to say, "It's the Wild West."

The basics that you need to know: Streams are totally live and, as such, are not edited which, in a lot of ways, can be the opposite of the social media with which we are accustomed. We are used to showing the highly edited, highly filtered versions of ourselves online. Periscope is not that. Breathe a sigh of relief though, dear friends; Periscope is a platform where you can finally be yourself. And to a lot of us, it's a breath of fresh air. In my opinion, it's exactly why the platform is growing exponentially. There's a deeper level of connection when we get real with each other. To me, that real humanity is absolutely beautiful.

With Periscope being owned by Twitter, a lot of the social media functionality flows through Twitter. Broadcasts are searchable in Twitter by hashtags. After your live broadcasts, they can be replayed through Periscope. Another unique feature that Periscope has: its broadcasts are only viewable for 24 hours. That's right! After 24 hours, they are no longer available to replay through Periscope. However, there are third-party apps (Katch.me) that allow you to save and repurpose your broadcasts. Many broadcasters save their videos and repurpose them on YouTube, in blog posts or in privately accessed membership sites. You can even study your viewer analytics via third party apps like FullScope.tv.

"PERISCOPE IS A PLATFORM WHERE YOU CAN FINALLY BE YOURSELF."





“It truly is a behind the scenes platform where my potential clients and colleagues can get to know me and my story. The connections made are genuine and human. There are so many things that can be learned when reading someone’s face and hearing their voice. Periscope is a chance to break free from perfection and have viewers love you just the way you are.”

CATHY OLSON

One of the most remarkable things about Periscope is the real-time engagement. Broadcasters are able to get real-time questions and give real-time answers. This feature can be game changing for both broadcasters and viewers. Broadcasters can speak directly to their audience, get on-the-spot feedback, and viewers can connect directly with the broadcaster, that real VIP access, to ask them anything.

The Periscope platform is easy and fun to use. The broadcaster controls what the viewers see, and the viewers can interact by tapping the screen to give them hearts (sort of an emoji-applause) and can comment via a keyboard at the bottom of the screen. The broadcaster sees this live and can respond or ignore the comments—and can also easily block any haters (called trolls). The viewer can choose to “follow” a certain broadcaster if they like what they see and want to be notified the next time they are live. They can also share the broadcast with their friends or followers via Periscope, Twitter or Facebook. The broadcaster can also see how many live viewers there are at any given time and can pay attention if those numbers are dropping or increasing and tailor their message accordingly. “Am I boring you guys?”

So, how do I personally use Periscope? I use it mostly for business but throw in a little fun here and there. I’m both learning and teaching on the platform. I am continually refining my brand message and strengthening my brand voice. I speak around the country at various events and conferences and I use the platform to practice and test out how my message is resonating. I love to learn from and share things with new audiences. It is truly a behind-the-scenes platform to me where my potential clients and colleagues can get to know me and my story. I can explain things about my business, and why they may want to hire us. The connections made on Periscope are so genuine and human—there are so many things that can be learned when reading someone’s face and hearing their voice. Think about all those subtleties in human interaction that only expressions and tone can convey. Periscope is a chance to break free from perfection and have viewers love you just the way you are. I would love to encourage you to try it out and have fun with it. You don’t have to be a broadcaster; you may be someone’s favorite viewer and provide immeasurable value to them. Also a fair warning—you might just totally love it! Happy Scoping!

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ALL ABOUT

PODCASTS



Paige Ray, Hear Motherhood

Paige Ray is the voice and heart behind Hear Motherhood, the podcast that asks, "Can motherhood and creativity coexist?" As the mom of an almost one year old, she is still trying to figure out how to make it all work but learning so much from other smart creative women along the way.

As a new mom, I found that I literally had my hands full, but I was aching to create. I knew I wanted to make a resource for women about combining motherhood and creativity. "I should start a podcast!" I thought. "Podcasting involves speaking, which doesn't involve writing or typing or photo editing like blogging." Now almost 20 episodes into my podcast, Hear Motherhood, I'm excited to give an intro into podcasting and share some of my experience.

I like to say that a podcast is a sort of audio blog. Podcasts are places to share stories, inspiration, education and entertainment. The unique value of a podcast is that, as a producer, I am talking directly to my listener. I say listener, singular, because though the audience is broad, when someone decides to put her earbuds in and listen to me, it's as if she and I are having a one-on-one conversation. As someone who rarely picks up the phone to call my closest friends, that audio connection is a unique asset in the digital age.

Anyone with a laptop, an internet connection and something to share can produce a podcast. There are several main categories in iTunes, and within each category, each individual producer has her unique point of view and delivery.

While podcast listeners have long lived in the territory of tech geeks and rising comedians, after the advent of Serial, podcasts suddenly seemed to be something that many different types of people listen to. Something that all podcasts listeners have in common? They are curious. These are people who would rather not listen to the same twelve songs on their morning commute day after day. These listeners are on the go. Podcasts can be listened to in a car, on a plane or on a run. Beyond the content,

listeners are looking to connect. While the initial listening does happen via a podcast player, the one-on-one connection that happens via audio almost always has the audience looking for ways to be a part of the conversation.

Podcasts are a great way for creative entrepreneurs and bloggers to grow their influence. The easiest way to make this happen is to listen and learn from podcasts. Another way to use podcasts to grow your influence is to say, "Yes!" if a podcaster wants to have you on their show. I know, we all hate the way our voice sounds, and almost no one loves the thought of "public speaking." However, as a creative entrepreneur, you know that your most valuable asset is your personal story followed by the ability to learn and grow. Being a guest on a podcast allows you to do both of these things.

And, of course, there is always the option to start your own podcast. I believe in and have seen the positive effect of this medium and I fully support anyone who wants to jump into podcasting. However, my initial thought that podcasting would, in some way, be "easier" than blogging was way off the mark. Because of the learning curve surrounding audio editing, the scheduling logistics of interviews and the fact that every post still has a corresponding website entry (i.e. writing, photo editing, etc.). I put much more time into podcasting than I ever did blogging. Keep this in mind if you decide to pursue podcasting. If you do decide to go for it, check out my list of recommended resources and equipment.

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Microphone

ATR 2100 USB

It's not the cutest thing in town, but this microphone has amazing sound quality for a fraction of the cost of most professional microphones and can plug right into your laptop. No fancy (i.e. intimidating) sound mixers needed.

Audio Editing Software

AUDACITY

This is a free, open-source, digital audio editor with great (also free) how-to's located on the online wiki page as well in the resources listed below.

Media Hosting

LIBSYN

Audio files are huge compared to what we normally store on our websites. For as low as \$5 a month, you can host your audio files here without fear of slowing down your website or your podcast download speeds.

Interview Software

SKYPE AND ECAMM

For those podcasts that are interview based, this is a low cost way to capture your fascinating conversations. Skype is free and ECamm is a Skype specific recorder for Macs that has a one-time fee. There is also similar PC software.

Information and Community

THEAUDACITYTOPodcast.COM

This site and podcast was where I learned how to edit audio. It literally took hours of referencing past episodes and making many small changes and tweaks in the process to produce my first episode. The audio explanation coupled with the texts to images on site made it simple for a visual learner like myself. (P.S. That initial process has gotten much faster as I've gotten more experience.)

SHEPODCASTS

Another podcast about podcasting, this one specifically directed toward women. And while the episodes are often entertaining, it's the closed Facebook group that is invaluable. With years of other podcasters' questions and experience to be searched at your fingertips, you can learn so much. That, coupled with the ability to post a, "Help! I don't know what to do!" plea ranging from first syndicating your show with iTunes to eventual monetization, makes this a wonderful resource for the new and more experienced podcasters.

You can hear Belong's Editor, Brooke Saxon-Spencer's interview on the She Percolates Podcast #107

WWW.SHEPERCOLATES.COM

what you'll need

“THERE IS NO SOCIAL PROOF OF HOW ‘COOL’ YOU ARE ON SNAPCHAT.”



ALL ABOUT

SNAPCHAT



Asia Croson and Paige Poppe, founders of Space to Face Podcast

Asia Croson and Paige Poppe are girlboss entrepreneurs and hosts of the Space to Face Podcast; a podcast for passionate creatives and entrepreneurs who want to bridge the gap between their online and local presences. We believe there is magic to be made in the blending of both! Asia is a professional photographer, personal blogger, and Editor in Chief of SLO What? Magazine. She is based in San Luis Obispo, California, and is fueled by Starbucks and her naturally bubbly energy. Asia is passionate about her local community and proving you're beautiful through her photography. Paige is an artist with an architecture degree, painting every day in Scottsdale, Arizona. Surrounded by the beautiful Sonoran desert that inspires her, she works in watercolor and acrylic to create her work and commissioned pieces to bring joy to her clients. Paige is an Instagram-addict, because she has made so many online and offline friends through the app, and loves encouraging others to pursue their passions. One fateful Facebook group and a few Instagram comments later, we were fast friends. As self-proclaimed “biz besties,” we love brainstorming about our businesses and created the podcast to share our unique business perspectives.

Oh, Snapchat. The illusive, newest (still feels new, right?) social media beast that has taken the world by storm without anyone actually seeing it. It's fascinating.

What is it, you ask? Snapchat is an app that allows users to take, send and receive “self-destructing” photos and videos, aptly called “snaps.” The creator can draw or insert text on the snap as well as determine how long (between 1-10 seconds) it can be viewed before it's “POOF!” gone as snaps can only be viewed by each recipient once. In addition, the snaps are only available to be accessed for 24 hours.

There are so many tricks that make it different than the rest of social media. You can't mindlessly scroll through Snapchat, you have to click on each person's story individually and commit to their narration. This makes it really exciting when people actually watch yours (“They like me! They really

really like me!”) and also eases the risk when you put something out there because it takes a whole extra step to click to watch what you've put out there-- but only for a mere 24 hours. There is also no social proof of how “cool” you are on Snapchat. No one can see how many viewers or comments you have. In fact, there are no comments at all, but you can ‘chat’ to a person. So you know when you're embarrassed when you only have 11 likes on Instagram (be honest, we've all been there)? Snapchat doesn't have that.

Let's break down Snapchat in the old-fashioned, “who, what, when, where, why” format. Actually, let's skip the where because...“anywhere” is the answer.

WHO: Who is Snapchat for? Anyone. So Snapchat may have started as a fun photo exchanging app for teens, but it has become the perfect tool for business owners to share the behind-the-scenes of our biz and personality, instantaneously. We love watching anyone from artists to photographers



(like us), to business coaches, YouTubers, fashion bloggers, podcast hosts and beyond.

WHAT: What do we put on Snapchat? It's really up whether you to keep it business or get more personal. Most apps these days encourage professionalism. For example, on Instagram, beautifully styled and well-lit photos are the norm. However, Snapchat is the opportunity to share what's happening outside of that perfect Instagram square. There's no need to stress about making everything look perfect. As for us, Asia and Paige, because we are personal brands, we like to blur the line between professional and personal. You will of course see Asia shooting a client at the beach, and see Paige painting a watercolor in the desert, but you'll also see our morning coffee routines, a road trip with friends or a bike ride with our boyfriends. Sharing this blend of both our business and personal lives lets our audience see who we are as people, and helps us connect with them like we were BFF's.

WHEN: When do we Snapchat? All. The. Time. Guilty! We Snapchat throughout most of our days. Rather than taking snaps here and there, we like to

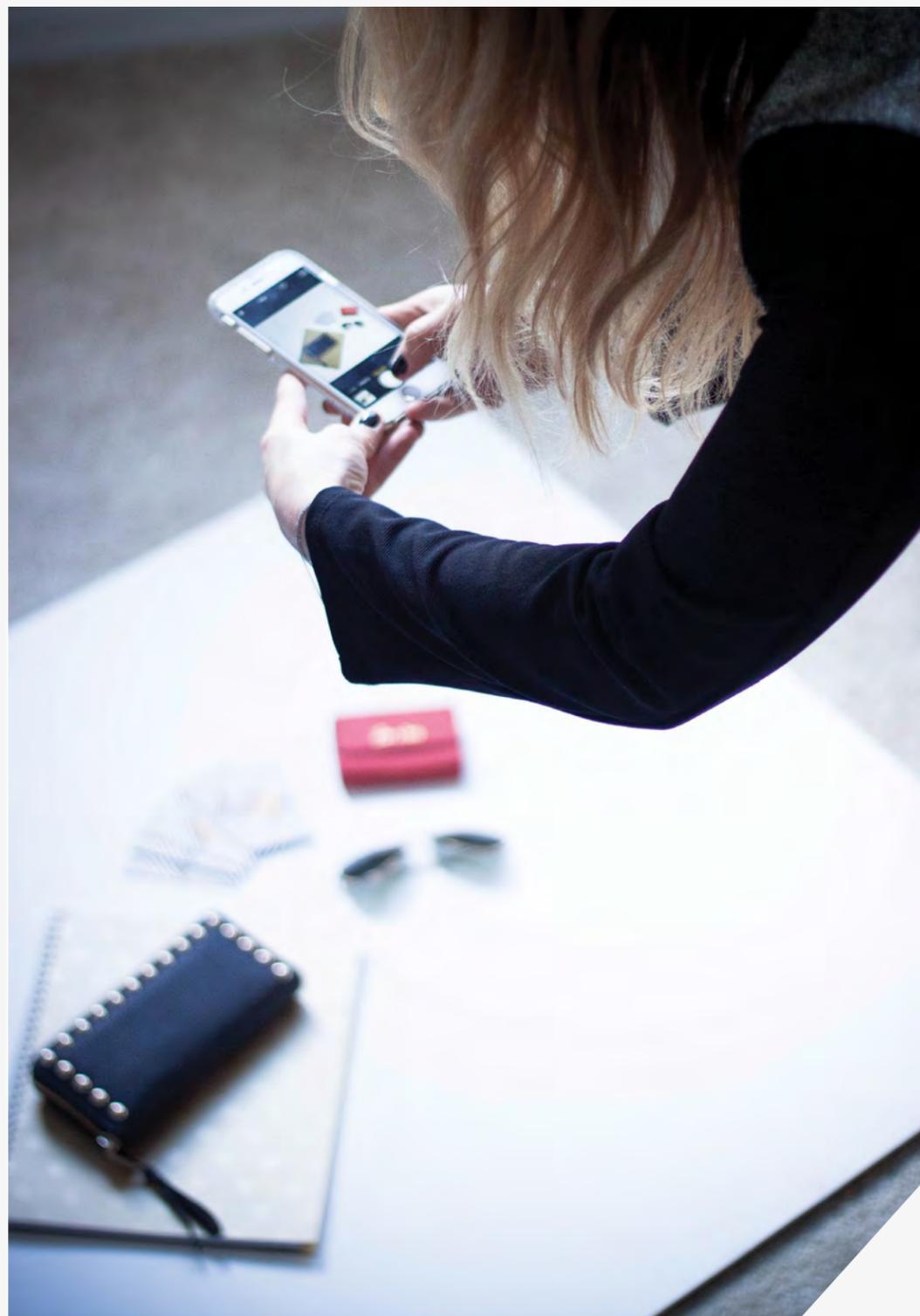
walk our viewer through the day with us so they don't get confused and can feel like they are actually there with us. This means we don't just share quick photos of what we're working on. We flip the camera onto ourselves, selfie-style, and narrate our days. Snapchat has built us friendships like you wouldn't believe! If you are snapping throughout the day, your audience can really get to know you. As we meet more of our online Snapchat friends in-person, we feel like we've known them forever because the app is so fun and personal.

WHY: Why do we Snapchat? We can't stress enough how much this app has changed our businesses! Our Snapchat stories are our most authentic and personable content that we put online. We share our lives, and it humanizes us to our audiences. When we get comments back on our snaps, it feels like we're talking to our friends. Even if you don't have a personal brand, it is a great tool for business. You don't need to share your breakfast in the morning, but you could still share those behind-the-scenes photos and videos we all love to see. Some ideas of what to share for a business snap could be: your team working on a new project, what the office looks like, sneak peeks of new products or a company party. There are really no rules to Snapchat which is what is making it so appealing to business owners!

HOW: Ready to get started? Let's learn how to Snapchat! We admit, the app is quite unique, so it can be a little tricky to pick up the logistics at first. We suggest checking out the how to's and tutorials on Support.Snapchat.com to get started or watching a video tutorial on YouTube. You could also just pick it up and press some buttons and you will be off in no time. Don't send everyone in your contact list a personal message with a snap of your breakfast, that's all we ask. Try a mixture of video and photos to see what you like! Simply trying it out will help you learn, and it will become second nature in no time.

We are so excited for you and your snap journey and for you to take on this magical beast once and for all. It's not as scary but more awesome (and fun!) than you think! Feel free to follow us for inspiration! @PaigePoppe @AsiaCroson.📷

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HOW TO GROW YOUR BIZ THROUGH

Insta- blogging



Abby Wood

Abby Wood is a wardrobe stylist and style blogger in Kansas City. Her professional experience in fashion began with an apprenticeship with a bridal designer, shifted to creating and showing her own line, moving up to management and training at a retail level and now professional styling as an independent consultant.

Abby loves to work with individuals and help them develop and evolve their own sense of style. Her design and retail backgrounds make her an expert in fit, fabric, style, and trends. She can be found insta-blogging on instagram as @abbywoodwear or on www.abbywoodwear.com

I had always thought about starting a blog, I just didn't know how to start.

It was January 2015. The previous year had been a roller coaster for me. I wanted 2015 to be the best it could possibly be, so I decided to sit down and figure out this whole "blogging" thing. It was a lofty goal, but I wanted to accomplish it no matter what.

I started my research on what I needed to do to start a blog. After reading A LOT of "10 things you need to do before starting a blog" articles, I became incredibly overwhelmed. In my world, "overwhelmed" usually equals anxiety, which leads to unproductivity that ends in moving onto something else before

accomplishing that goal. This time, the overwhelmed feeling was different. I thought, "Maybe I'm not feeling overwhelmed at all. Maybe... this is excitement for an adventure that is about to come."

I had no idea how much work went into setting up and managing a successful blog and website. In reading blog after blog from around the world, I found savvy businesswomen that had a talent for writing and a knack for being influencers in the fashion world. That is exactly what I wanted to be too. However, I realized if I wanted to be heard or have people read my blog, I needed to figure out a way to build a community and find my voice.

I realized if I wanted to be heard or have people read my blog, I needed to figure out a way to build a community and find my voice.

I love Instagram. Over the past two years it has grown to be my favorite social media platform. I love meeting people from around the globe with similar interests. I love sharing moments through images instead of just through words. I love being able to find genuine and authentic inspiration from real life.

So, in January of 2015, I started Instablogging. Every day I was microblogging through Instagram about food, fashion, style tips and inspirational messages. Slowly I started gaining followers. I paid close attention to what my followers liked and didn't like so that I knew what to continue writing. I checked Iconosquare (an Instagram analytics site) multiple times during the day to analyze my statistics. I started engaging more with my own followers—commenting and liking posts that inspired me. Then I went down the rabbit hole of #hashtags, searching and following others with key phrases like #fashionblogger, #OOTD (outfit of the day), #styleguide and #igstyle. I found people that inspired me and built online friendships with many of them. At the beginning of 2015 I had 150 followers. One year later, I have 1100 and am still growing. Instablogging gave me the opportunity to build a community and a brand for my blog before putting it out into cyberspace. It also gave me a chance to zero in on the focus of my blog: fashion and style.

I finally published my blog last fall and coordinated it with the launch of my personal styling business, Abby.Wood.Wear. When the day finally came to go live with my blog, I couldn't believe the response. It was overwhelming... but in a wonderful way. My adventure in the style-blogging world had finally begun! Taking the time to micro blog through Instagram helped me gain followers that were engaged daily and continue to "hop on over to the blog" when I have new posts up. Building a community with genuine relationships and followers is ideal to continue long-term engagement and interest.

3 KEY TIPS TO START INSTABLOGGING:

1. **As I began posting more, I started seeing more likes with certain hashtags.** #styleblogger and #wardrobestylist introduce new users to my profile and allow me to engage with new potential followers. On a personal level, pictures of my doodle #duncanwood are very popular through #dogsofinstagram and allows potential followers to see a behind-the-scenes look into my life.

2. I was shocked I received activity on my 7am posts. Another popular time frame for my followers seems to be during a 3pm coffee break! **Certain times of the day can be used to target more traffic to your profile so pay close attention to find high interaction time slots.**

3. **Find an easy way to track traffic to your site.** Apps like bit.ly report clicks per hour and per day on links added to your profile. Since Instagram does not allow direct links through posting, bit.ly helps track what links are most popular.

Are you thinking of starting a blog, but are a little unsure? Try Instablogging first and you just might find your answer! 🍷

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Q&A

WITH MEGGAN WOOD,
FOUNDER OF LILY JADE



Who are you? (like REALLY)

I'm a woman who loves coffee, Jesus, and a great bra-- let's be real, I've had two kids! I am a wife and a mom. I am a person who loves to pour out encouragement and value on those I meet. It's really the gift that keeps on giving. I love my family; my little tribe of four is the best!

What was the inspiration behind creating a designer diaper bag line?

When I found out I was pregnant with my oldest daughter, Caroline, I was so excited. I love a good handbag, and, naturally, I knew motherhood would require a new bag that fit my role PERFECTLY. What began as an exciting search, however, quickly turned into wading through a sea of quilted cotton, busy prints and noisy, crinkly, wipeable fabrics. By the time my second daughter Madeline was born, I was so fed up with diaper bags that were unattractive and barely functional that I was literally carrying around a soft sided cooler. Not my finest moment! But it birthed my determination to make something better. I wanted something that had the perfect amount of pockets to organize me and my girls, but it also had to be beautiful. After all, these bags have memories wrapped inside them! From the start, it was important to me that we created a bag that would GROW with us in our journey of motherhood.

We love the name Lily Jade. Where does it come from?

At the heart of it, Lily Jade was not birthed out of a need for diaper bags but as a way to elevate the role of motherhood and womanhood. A lily represents the heart of a woman, and the jade shows the strength of character and heart that a mother has. It's been our desire to reach both of those places--soft heart with a strength for life.

Fun fact: our company's name is special, but so are the names of all our bags! The Madeline and the Caroline are named after my daughters, and every other bag is named after someone special to us.

Lily Jade bags are sold exclusively online. Why?

We believe in our bags, so our heart is to make them as affordable and accessible as possible. If we sold in retail stores or had a storefront, we'd have to sell them for much more. We use the finest materials on all our bags, so keeping overhead costs low enables us to reach and bless more women!

Share your thoughts on social media and how it's a part of your branding.

Social media is not a part of our branding--it IS our branding! We were so blessed to be introduced to it early on. I've always been active on Facebook, but Instagram has been a whole new and amazing world! I really think social media is the modern woman's version of meeting down at the river to wash clothes together. We might be spread out all over the world, but we can support and speak life to each other online.

Describe the Lily Jade community.

Our community has been amazing--I have been so blessed watching it grow. Almost every month, we put out some kind of call for our follower's stories. And then we grab a box of tissues and watch the stories of amazing women roll in! That's really at the heart of who we are--we tell stories. And the women in our community have a chance to say, "me too!" They feel validated, heard and loved. I count myself privileged to get to share this little corner of the internet with these women.

Which Lily Jade bag is your personal favorite?

Oh, this is a tough one! I carry them all at different times and for different reasons. It would be like choosing a favorite child! I am currently carrying the Meggan in Red--it's not even out yet! It's a beauty though and a fun pop of color. I love to carry the Madeline, Caroline or the Elizabeth when I travel; they slide under the plane seats so well.

What's inside your Lily Jade bag right now?

Oh, my. I have a lot of "Mary Poppins" in me--I carry everything in my bag! Currently, I have two Lily Jade makeup bags. The large one carries my makeup and the smaller one carries my travel hairspray, lotion, pads, medicine etc. I carry a wallet, and an extra pair of underwear for my girls. My youngest is six and hasn't had an accident in years but one accident in a store leaves us all traumatized! I think I will always have an extra pair of panties in a zip-lock bag.... I always have my phone, keys, wall charger, notebook/planner, pens, water bottle, and a protein bar of some sort. When I grab my bag, I'm ready for anything! 📁

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5 Secrets from a Wardrobe Stylist

WITH ABBY WOOD

1. THE POWER OF 3

Looking to freshen up your favorite outfit? Think about incorporating a third piece like a vest, blazer, leather jacket or long, duster sweater. Third pieces transform an outfit into a completely different look with just one simple addition!



PHOTO C. ALBO PHOTOGRAPHY



2. OPPOSITES ATTRACT

Fashion rules are made to be broken. Don't be afraid to combine color palettes that you wouldn't normally see. Pair bright cherry red pants with a bold fuchsia top and finish it off with a black or white blazer to balance it out.

3. MONOCHROMATIC DRESSING

Dressing in hues of one color is a classic look. Blush pink, shades of grey and black or hues of creams create a cohesive style. One color dressing elongates your legs and torso and always results in a sophisticated look.

4. WINTER WHITE ALL YEAR

For years, wearing white in the wintertime was a major faux pas. Not anymore! White denim is perfect for Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter too. Looking for inspiration? Pair a buttery-cream sweater or a light-grey tee with your white denim for a classic look. You now have permission to shop for the perfect pair of all-seasons white denim pants—this trend is here to stay.

5. SPLURGE VS. SAVE

When shopping on a budget, it's important to get the most for your money. ALWAYS splurge on quality undergarments. These pieces are worn EVERYDAY and will ultimately wear-out quicker than pieces you wear every other week. Purchasing quality and well-fitting undergarments can change the way you look in your clothing—always for the better! Don't invest in a \$500 top if you are only going to spend \$15 on a bra. Take it from a stylist and lingerie specialist, get measured annually and make the investment! ☺

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We Are All Creative



Dominique Anders

Dominique Anders is an Entertainment Producer and Certified Business and Lifestyle Coach for Creative Power Players. Being the founder of a production company and a coaching practice, Dominique knows what it's like to juggle both the creative and logistical sides of business. She brings over a decade of experience as a Co-Executive Producer, Director and Writer for television, documentaries and branded entertainment as she works with creatives and small businesses to help them set goals, focus on projects and face their fears along the way. When Dominique isn't near a camera or working with clients, you can usually find her at an airport, passport in hand, or surfing the beaches of California and Hawaii.



PHOTO LOVE PLUS COLOR

There's a misconception that unless we're in an artistic field working as a designer, photographer or blogger then we're not creative. This is so wrong. By nature, we all do something unique and creative everyday from how we wake up, how we organize our day, down to how we answer an email.

Our individuality influences our creativity.

When people say they're not creative it often has less to do with their actual skills and more to do with their fear and lack of confidence around their creativity. They think that it's not a skill they can learn—they were either born creative or they weren't. We all know this isn't true because, as with anything, the more we practice something the better we become at it, right?

For those of us who make a living through using our imaginations, the pressure to perform and pump out fresh ideas can feel overwhelming. Almost everyone gets to the point where they feel like the well has run dry and their creative muse has skipped them over. But I want to let you in on a little secret: that will never happen... at least not long term.

Here's why...**Creativity is as much about art and emotion as it is about problem solving.**

Just like there will always be problems, there will always be solutions, and that's the creative part. Think of it this way: any time you solve a problem, you are creatively coming up with a solution. Apply this concept to art, writing, photography and so on and you'll have endless possibilities with how to harness your creativity.

One of the biggest reasons we get stuck when we use our creativity is that we put too much pressure on it. Think of it as a little kid. Sure at first, she's making things, you're proud of her, everyone's happy. But the more we push her to create and work, the less fun she has because really, she just wants to play.

Creativity just wants to play. So what do you do when you've pushed all your creative buttons, but you're coming up blank? Here's 6 ways to bring your creative spark back:

1. DO IT DAILY

Every pro knows that some days they'll rock it out while other days won't be as successful. If you create something daily, odds are you'll end up with some amazing results mixed in.

2. SWITCH UP YOUR SCENERY

Staring at the same desk, facing the same wall,

looking out the same window is bound to feel monotonous at some point. Try out a new space in your home, head to the park or go to a library. Changing up where you work forces your brain to think differently, which in turn gets those creative juices flowing.

3. TAKE A STEP BACK

Remember that time you showed your art at a gallery or pressed send on your newsletter or published your blog post? It was awesome, right? Recalling a time when you felt successfully creative is one of the fastest ways to regain your creative confidence.

4. PRESS PAUSE

You know when you have that problem you can't solve so you fixate on it and ask your friends, family and coworkers for advice? Then you go do something else for a while and when you return, you find a solution? Same thing goes for creativity. The more you fixate on trying to be creative, the harder it is to do.

5. CHANGE YOUR METHOD

We tend to stick to whatever creative outlet we feel most comfortable in, but trying our hand at something different allows for us to create in new ways. If you're a writer, paint. If you're a photographer, draw. This helps work your creative muscles in a way they're not accustomed to so, when you go back to your medium of choice, you'll have a new perspective to work from.

6. SAY YES TO SOMETHING NEW

Getting out of your element and trying something new is one of the strongest ways to ignite your creativity—all of your senses will be firing as you experience it for the first time. The trick here is getting out of your comfort zone to do it. Need a push? Go back to #3 and apply that to something you were terrified to do, but did anyways! 🍀

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The Unconventional Blogger



Blare June

Blare June is a lifestyle blogger from Halifax, Nova Scotia. What makes Blare June's blog unique is that in addition to fashion she writes about mental illness, empowerment, and overall wellness. When Blare June isn't blogging, she is working as a physician specializing in psychiatry in Halifax.

Women today are constantly reminded of ideals, impacted by pressures and influenced by the perceived opinions of others. The beauty, fashion and blogging industries are no exception and if anything, pressures are often magnified in these fields. Prior to starting my own blog, I felt compelled to represent myself in a certain way as a result of stereotypes and perceived expectations.

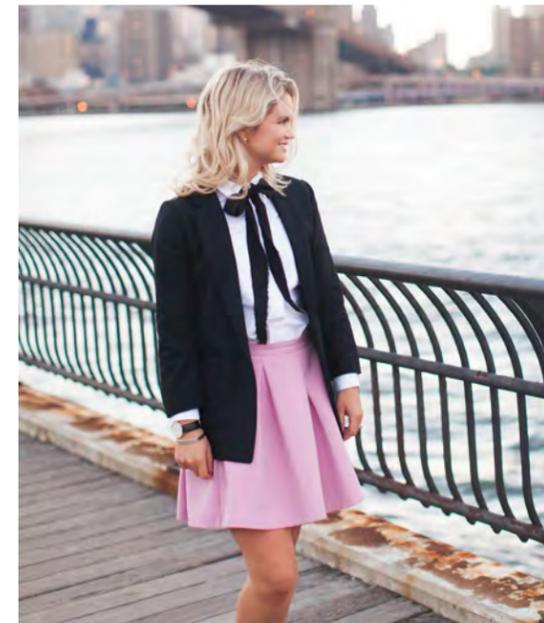
In addition to being a blogger, I proudly work as a physician specializing in psychiatry (hence being unconventional). Ever since I was a young girl I liked to express myself creatively. In addition to my creative interests, I was continuously curious about the intersection between the mind, brain and human behavior. As this curiosity evolved, I decided that I wanted to work in the field of mental illness.

However, throughout my education I continued to find myself returning to an endless search for a creative outlet. My blog was born as a result of finally deciding to diverge from who I am 'supposed' to be to embracing who I actually am; a physician

who unconventionally blogs. I'm aware that a lifestyle blog is not the usual medium for discussing mental illness but that is exactly what I hope to change. Mental illness directly or indirectly affects us all, so why shouldn't it be part of our everyday discussions?

My blog was born as a result of finally deciding to diverge from who I am 'supposed' to be to embracing who I actually am; a physician who unconventionally blogs.

As you embark on your blogging journey you may (likely will) be presented with situations that can result in you feeling anxious and overwhelmed. Don't fret; there are things you can do to help increase your resilience and your capacity to cope with such pressures. I like to refer to these simple steps as the STAPLES (think of the following as that classic blazer you wear every season....year after year). Above all, always be your true self...regardless if perceived as conventional or not.



1. Eat healthy, break a sweat and sleep often.

Just as you maintain a household you need to maintain your body's home. Consider eating more whole foods, attend a local workout class regularly and give your body the sleep it requires. Our ability to cope goes out the door when we are hungry, non energetic and overtired.

2. Erase the negativity

We all have that relationship, friendship or acquaintance that doesn't make us feel good about our work or ourselves. It's ok to erase any negativity. We have one life and it should be positive (or at least attempted at being such). It's important to surround yourself with like-minded people who you can relate to and who make you feel good.

3. Define boundaries

Sometimes we think we are superwoman and that we can fit every last social event into our crammed calendars. Consider saying 'no' and re-defining your own personal boundaries. It's important to be realistic regarding what needs to be done now and what can wait for a later date.

4. Be good to self

We are often our toughest critics and hardest on ourselves. Self-compassion is important to living a healthy and productive life. Do something mindful and enjoyable for yourself daily. When patiently waiting for the next big break or opportunity with your blog, reflect on your achievements and how far you have come. Rome wasn't built in a day. ☺

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you
are
enough

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Rain or Shine

THE BLOG MUST GO ON!



Rashina Gajjar

Rashina Gajjar is a writer, digital strategist and Editor-in-Chief of Globe of Love, a website she founded in 2014. She speaks three languages and is extremely passionate about travel, self-improvement and finding your inner Beyoncé. Follow her avocado-heavy lifestyle on Instagram at @rashinagajjar

Sometimes, life happens. By life, I mean email avalanches, emergency friendship crises, non-negotiable family reunions and the crucial, yet seemingly impossible, task of using up all your vegetables before they expire so you don't have to feel like an irresponsible vegetable shopper.

What happens to your blog when the whirlwind of life is sweeping you up and clattering you about with endless moans of deadlines and emergency breakup interventions? Does it rust over into a quasi-hibernative state or does it sit patiently, en attente de nouvelles? What happens to your readers? Do they realize you're gone (sobs), or do they continue to walk through their everyday lives feeling like a special something is missing from their digital stratosphere, but never quite knowing what?

I have had endless moments of crises and along with battling to keeping my head afloat and my courgettes fresh, I've discovered that these circumstances cannot, nay, will not beat me or my darling blog. Why labor for years, why pour your every hope and thought into your very own corner of the internet only to have it collapse into devastating

disrepair? You deserve better. Your blog deserves better! Here are techniques to keep the peeling wallpapers and dusty floors of your digital home looking (and feeling) sparkling new:

AUTOMATION IS YOUR BEST FRIEND.

Nobody can be in ten places at the same time. Even if you don't have the funds to invest in sophisticated software that will ping out your emails like some kind of invincible email-warrior, you can (and should) invest in a few trusty tools to make your life easier. WordPress offers a simple and highly effective editorial calendar plugin. What does this mean? Gone are those emergency, flustered, moments you desperately race against the clock to publish that article you forgot about three weeks ago. Schedule it. When you have a tiny space of time, you can start preparing for the future posts, the future articles, the tiny, important details you may not have time to fuss over later.

BLAST THROUGH YOUR INBOX. If you receive a storm of emails on a daily basis, your inbox

can quite easily and, with frightening rapidity, turn into a danger zone that is neither understandable nor handle-able (or so you think). But here's a trick: if the ebb and flow of your inbox is getting to be too much, set aside an afternoon to clear the slate. Pour yourself a large glass of wine, scroll back (yes, I know it hurts) and start replying. You will get into the flow and soon there will be no emails left. I promise.

TAP INTO THE SISTERHOOD. If you no longer have time to write without your brain fuzzing over and your eyes going hazy, fear not. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of lovely bloggeresses out there just waiting to ping you a little guest post! Reach out to your community, set a theme and let the sisterhood help you out! When things start to ease up for you, return the favor and help out those gorgeous human beings who got you out of a pickle!

REGULARITY IS KING. Quantity is important if you have very few articles, but if that's not the case (and I should hope it isn't!), you shouldn't have to worry too much about filling your blog with

endless words if it doesn't fit in with your lifestyle. One thing you do have to worry about, however, is regularity. A really important thing to do for yourself is make sure you're posting regularly. It may be once a week or once a month, but make sure there's something for your readers to get excited about on a regular basis!

TAKE IT STEP BY STEP. The French say: 'petit à petit' and the Italians say: 'piano, piano'. I say: keep powering through! By advancing slowly but surely you can (and will) achieve your goals. This is certain, just don't give up on the game. Brace yourself, get on that kickass attitude that's been hanging in the closet for too long and embrace the bumps along the way! 🍷

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DO IT YOURSELF

Puzzle Piece Coasters



Ashley Lloyd, founder, Let's Mingle

Ashley is a modern hostess and loves to break down the facade that makes entertaining seem complicated and difficult. She shares recipes, DIY projects, tips, tricks, and trends to make entertaining easy for everyday celebrations on her blog "Let's Mingle". She has a background in event management and has been planning her own parties since the age of 8. She loves fresh flowers, mailed invitations, chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream, and a table full of guests. She lives in Salt Lake City, Utah with her husband and three pugs, Ava, Oscar, and Sophie.

I love a good party. Entertaining friends is one of my absolute favorite things to do, but with entertaining comes stains, spills, and water marks on your table. There's no reason why you can't entertain and maintain a mess-free space at the same time! And do it stylishly too!

This tutorial for puzzle piece coasters is a simple project that you can pull off in an afternoon and still have time to put your feet up before your guests arrive.

The puzzle piece coasters can be used individually for single glasses, or you can piece them together to create a larger coaster for a pitcher or a vase. It doesn't hurt that they are fun to use too!

Don't let water stains get in the way of you and a gathering with friends. With a few supplies, you'll be prepared for a round of cocktails and fun long into the evening.

SUPPLIES:

- Upholstery Vinyl - Any Color or Pattern
- Cork Roll (I used 5/32", but you could also use 1/8")
- Hot Glue Gun and Glue Sticks
- Scissors
- Utility Knife
- Pen or Pencil
- Puzzle Piece Stencil or Pattern

DIRECTIONS:

1. Create a puzzle piece pattern in the same size you want your coasters to be. You can design your own pieces using an illustrator program or a cutting machine. If you don't have the resources to design your own, you can easily scan a few real puzzle pieces on a scanner and enlarge them until you have them to the correct size. Print them out and cut out four individual pieces, ensuring that they will all fit together to create one larger piece.

2). If using a cork roll, roll your cork out in advance

and weight it down until flat: overnight, or longer, works best, depending on how thick your roll is; if you don't use flat cork, your cork will want to roll up on you during the process of making your coasters).

3). Once your cork roll is flat, trace the puzzle piece pattern onto the cork with a pen or pencil. Repeat the same process on the back of your upholstery vinyl as well.

4). Using a utility knife, gently cut your puzzle pieces out of the cork. The utility knife will help create clean lines in your cork and prevent it from breaking. Cork is naturally really brittle and it's easy to split.

5). Using scissors, cut out the puzzle piece shapes from your upholstery vinyl.

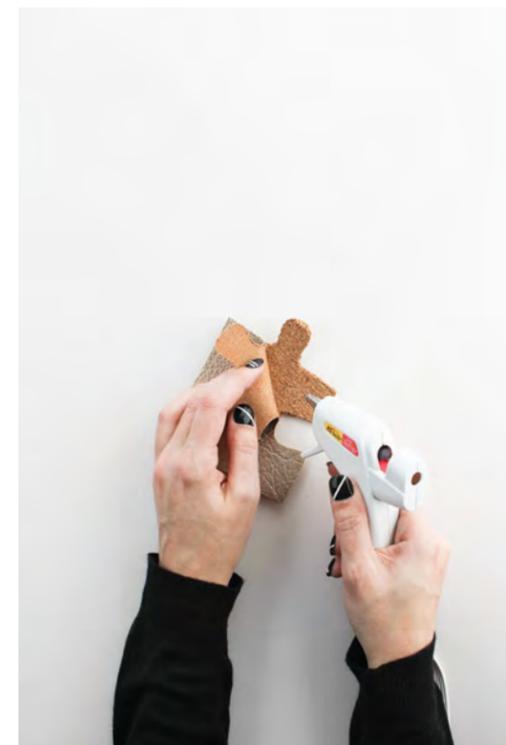
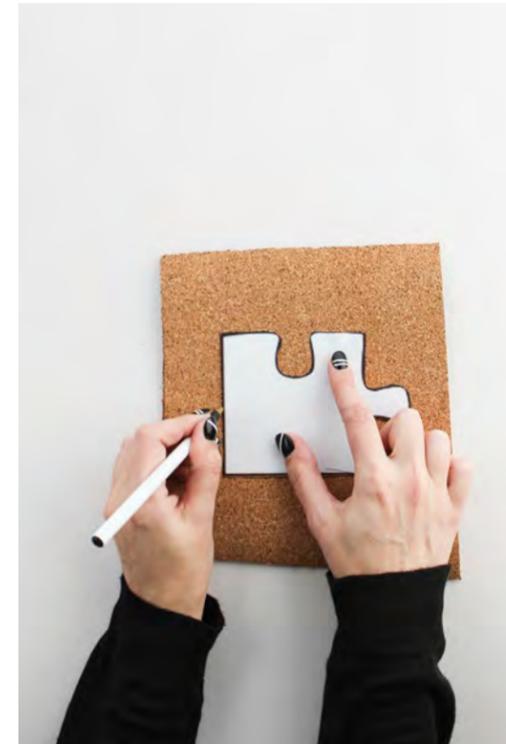
6). Before you begin gluing, place all of your cork puzzle pieces together to ensure they fit together correctly. If not, make careful adjustments to your cork using your utility knife. Repeat the same process with your upholstery fabric, making adjustments, if needed.

7). Place your upholstery vinyl pieces on top of your cork pieces. Make sure they fit correctly and completely cover the cork. You don't want that to show!

8). Using your hot glue gun, secure the upholstery vinyl to the cork and press together firmly, smoothing the vinyl out as you go, to ensure there are no bumps or bubbles. Repeat for all pieces.

9). Make a pitcher of cocktails or mocktails, pour into glasses and enjoy using your new coasters! 🍹

FIND MORE ABOUT ASHLEY AT:
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SPRING SIPS

BEGINNER'S LUCK GREEN SMOOTHIE

BY SIMPLE GREEN SMOOTHIES

Makes 32 oz | Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

2 cups spinach, fresh (tightly packed)
2 cups water
1 cup mango
1 cup pineapple
2 bananas

DIRECTIONS

Tightly pack your leafy greens into a measuring cup and toss into blender. Add water and blend together until all leafy chunks are gone. Next add in mango, pineapple and bananas and blend again.

TIPS

1. Use at least one frozen fruit to chill your smoothie.
2. If you aren't a big fan of bananas, feel free to substitute with another fruit, like extra mangos. You can even freeze the bananas first to reduce the flavor and also add some extra chill to your smoothie.

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ARÁNDANO PALOMA (CRANBERRY POMELO PALOMA)

BY ASHLEY ROSE CONWAY

CRAFTANDCOCKTAILS.CO • @ASHROSECONWAY

Winters bounty may not be as fruitful as those of spring and summer, but what it does it does right! Squash pomegranates, blood oranges, cranberries, and pomelos to name a few. I took two, cranberries (because right now it's all cranberry errythang) along with pomelos, and made them into a drink to sip on alongside my favorite brunch dish chilaquiles.

If you have never had a pomelo before, they are similar to grapefruit, but with a very thick green skin. They are actually the parents of grapefruits. An orange and a pomelo got together one day, bow chicka wow wow, and out came the grapefruit, or something like that! They have a bit more vitamin C than grapefruits, but their juice tastes and looks similar.

Since chilaquiles are a Mexican staple, I figured I'd make a tequila drink, a natural pairing. My first thought of what to make was a Paloma. Paloma's are actually consumed more in Mexico than margaritas, believe it or not. For good reason: tart grapefruit juice and/or soda is used in place of lime juice which makes it easier to make and slightly sweeter, perfect for a scorching hot day.

I created a cranberry syrup to mix with soda water to make the soda base, paired with fresh squeezed pomelo juice, tequila blanco, and of course a salted rim. I don't think the salted rim is traditional, but I love the way the saltiness melds with agave spirits and controls the sweetness from the soda and juice!

Serving | 1 glass

INGREDIENTS

2 oz tequila blanco (I used Espolon blanco, c/o Campari America)
3 oz soda water
1 1/4 oz cranberry syrup (recipe here)
1 pomelo juice (or 3/4 oz grapefruit juice)
squeeze of lime juice
Fresh cranberries & pomelo slice, garnish
Salt

DIRECTIONS

Make the cranberry syrup. Add salt to a plate. Run wedge of pomelo around the rim of a glass. Turn the glass upside down and twist in the salt to coat. Place cranberry syrup to a separate glass, add soda water and store to combine. In the salted glass, add pomelo juice, lime juice and tequila and stir. Top with cranberry soda. Garnish with cranberry skewer and pomelo slice.



BLACKBERRY MOCKTAIL

BY JO SIDDIQUI

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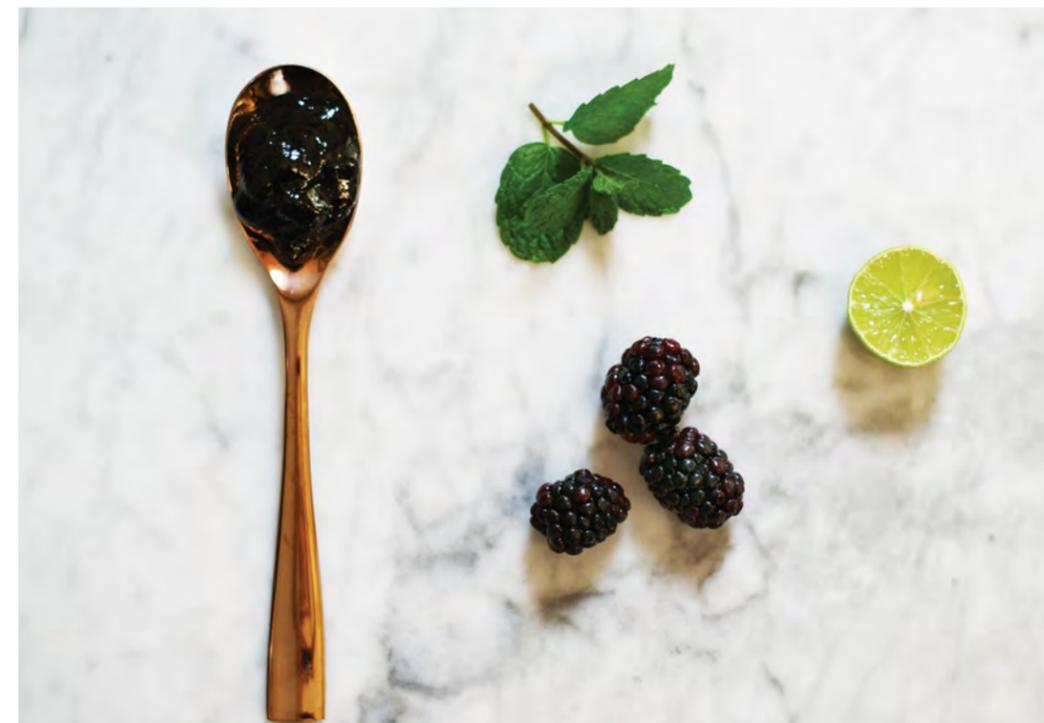
Serving | 1 glass

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon Blackberry jam
 1 ounce simple syrup (can adjust up or down for sweetness)
 1/2 ounce lime juice (1 tablespoon)
 1/4 teaspoon Vanilla extract
 Few mint leaves
 Lime wedges
 Club Soda or Perrier
 Ice
 Blackberries and mint leaves for garnish (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. In the bottom of a glass place Blackberry jam, mint leaves, simple syrup, vanilla extract, 2 lime wedges, and lime juice.
2. Using a muddler or handle of a wood spoon, muddle the ingredients in the bottom of the glass focusing on breaking down the lime wedges and mint leaves.
3. Fill glass with ice and top off with about 6 ounces of sparkling water or club soda.
4. Garnish with a few blackberries and mint leaves (optional).



Don't Keep It To Yourself

WHY YOUR IDEAS NEED TO COME OUT



Ashley Beaudin

Ashley is a visionary and firecracker. Through Fire + Wind Co. and The Firework Box, she uses her platform to encourage and empower women to create businesses of soul and success. Ashley has been published in countless publications worldwide, spoken to numerous audiences on the power of passion and community and worked with women from over a dozen nations to take their business into the next level using their words and heart. She also has a thing for high-fives, giggling and she'll probably want to hug you.

There are ideas inside of you that the world needs. There are solutions you carry for which people are waiting. There is gold in you so bright and rich that when you bring it to the table, people will be changed by the magic of who you are.

I often wonder about all the ideas that are sitting inside of people just waiting to be realized. I think about what it takes for women to wake up to those ideas—saying yes to them, acting on them and turning those big ideas into amazing plans. We need women to rise into their power; it is a gift to the entire planet.

The ideas you have—the plans you cannot stop thinking about, the thoughts that keep you up at night and the ones that thrill your soul... those were never meant to stay inside. Those were meant to come out. They were meant to be played with, danced with, owned and brought into the light.

They are in you on purpose, as if you are the one who has everything you need to turn it into reality.

And, sure, not every idea will work or be a brilliant explosion, but that's what makes them an adventure. Who knows the earthquake effect of what's waiting on your decision to say yes to the most random and wildest of dreams sitting inside your heart?

YOUR IDEAS WILL MAKE YOU COME ALIVE.

Sometimes it is the arbitrary ideas that will make you come alive the most. When is the last time you threw yourself into an idea that your heart couldn't shake and you were transformed by it?

I travelled to Asia to work with the poor for a couple of months. That experience taught me about love and my own heart more than I could have ever imagined. Was it scary to step outside of myself? Yes. Was it uncomfortable to travel for two months? Yes. Was it an idea that made me come alive? One hundred percent, yes.



YOUR IDEAS BREAK NEW GROUND.

Here's the thing, you have an idea in you that could be a breakthrough for someone else. It may be a business, a blog post, a project, a campaign or an organization. Whatever it is, when you step out and say, "I'm going to try this," that can be power for someone else.

You might not know the impact you can create. Your willingness to share your story could inspire someone to share their own. Your decision to be a coach could break others out of their fear and lead them into confidence. Your responsibility is not in creating the results but to respond to the ideas.

YOUR IDEAS ARE AN ANSWER FOR SOMEONE.

We have a ton of crazy going on in our world. There are huge, global issues like poverty and human trafficking and social issues like loneliness and self-hatred. There are people who are scared to leave their homes and others who simply need to know what it feels like to have a family.

What if someone told you that you carry the answer to one of these massive problems, but right now it's appearing as an idea inside of you? Does that move you to action? Don't let your gold collect dust.

YOUR IDEAS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.

Maybe your ideas seem minute to you. They just seem little. They don't feel insanely powerful or like they could change the entire world. But they have the potential to do so. No one can do the work you're called to do except for you. No one can bring it the way that you can. Your mix of personality, gifts, passion and story is pure perfection. You show up to the table, and we're all changed. If you don't show up to the table, that spot never gets filled, and we all miss out.

Bring your ideas—the wild and crazy ones, the ones that feel small and the ones that feel way too big. Bring them. Let them out. Your ideas could change someone's life tomorrow. Your ideas could break open a whole new way of thinking. Your ideas could change lives from struggle into strength.

This is why I sit with the voice of the world in my heart and say to you now, "Friend, show us all that you have inside". ☺

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Chasing Perfection



Kerilynn Snyder

Wife to Nick and mom to three wonderful children, I love to use my day-to-day, moment-by-moment life in South Carolina to pour inspiring truth into women. I'm a huge fan of dark chocolate, coffee, and a good planner. I also love friendship and conversation.

In years past, I spent a lot of time and energy chasing perfection. I wanted to do everything perfectly, to secure the perfect life. I obsessed over following the rules so I would get my anticipated result. From dating, to marriage, to parenting, to my home, everything had to be perfect—a vain attempt to erase the imperfections of the past.

Growing up I heard the stories of the women in my family and I knew I wanted a different story. I would go through the motions at school, never opening up about the struggles of life. As long as I smiled and said the right words, everything was perfect.

Over the years, my eyes were blinded by my race for perfection. It was not until I became a mom that God started to open my eyes to the weedy garden in my soul that had been created by striving for perfection. Motherhood is full of messes and imperfections. Suddenly I was in a role, where no matter how hard I tried, perfection seemed further and further from my reach.

I had always dreamed of being a mom, so when the struggles came and moments did not happen how I envisioned, I became frustrated. People would stop by when my house was in shambles or my children would throw fits in the aisles of Target. Here's the worst part: the more I sought perfection, the more I became frustrated with myself.

In the middle of one particularly challenging mothering season I decided to try out a mom's group. Deep inside I craved real community, so with the encouragement of my husband, I took a step out in faith and attended the group. I took the risk of being exposed, and it was worth it.

I met women who shared openly about life in that group. They were real in laying their struggles and messes out on the tables. There were no masks, no pretend smiles—just rawness and fruitful authenticity. As friendships formed with some of those ladies, I was able to start opening up more and sharing about my own life, even the parts I once strived to hide. I bonded with other young moms

going through similar struggles and together we grew.

With these women on my team, I soon started the extremely messy process of tearing down the walls I had built around my soul. I knew it was finally time to embrace my story... one full of imperfections, but also beauty—so much beauty. As I share more and open up more, I am able to connect more with others. Every time I share, while I risk rejection or hurt, I also have a chance for deep connection and trust.

That is the amazing thing. When we take down the walls we have constructed and allow others to see into our lives, we are able to build true and deep friendships. There is so much beauty that comes from our broken stories.

There is great beauty in my story and in your story. We need to share our stories from the past and our stories from the present. For every story told, there is someone who needed to hear those words. Each of us can connect with different people because of our unique stories. Just think, if we only share the perfect moments, where is the hope? Where is the encouragement?

Take the leap and share the imperfect and how you were brought through it. It is when we share our struggles that we are able to connect at the deepest level. That's truly a sweet reward.

Whether you are sharing your story through Instagram, on a blog or in person over coffee, the point is that we are sharing them and someone will find solace in knowing they aren't alone. We can be a voice of light. We can be a voice of hope to the hurting mama, the lonely wife, the discouraged creative. We hold power inside us to cultivate deep connection. Will we take the risk? For me, it was worth it. ☺

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Bloguettes



Bloguettes was co-founded by **LORENA GARCIA** and **SAKURA CONSIDINE** to provide the resources needed for developing your business or expanding your blog. Workshops are happening throughout the year in various cities—you can check out the details and register to attend on their website: www.bloguettes.com

If you're a blogger, an entrepreneur, a creative or any combination of the above, then Bloguettes is for you. Seriously. We all have our go-to resources, but this might just be that special something you need to support your brand and to take things to the next level. A Bloguettes workshop is a thing of beauty—literally. All the details have been carefully planned and executed to create an event where you'll be encouraged, educated, uplifted and inspired.

In September 2015, Bloguettes hosted their largest workshop to date in their hometown of Phoenix, Arizona. Attended by over 50 people, the sharing, learning and sense of community was electric. The two-day workshop included workshops focusing on blogging, marketing, photography, social media and branding. It certainly didn't fizzle the feel that there was an abundance of delicious, locally sponsored food and lots of time spent in open discussion, allowing everyone to connect and share.

Because we all know that the details make all the difference, the Bloguette team jazzed up their Phoenix studio with colorful rugs, live plants and, of course, breathtaking florals. Having bright hues of vibrant oranges, reds and yellows added a special pop to every table while the leafy backdrop on the

wall was a main attraction. Candy-colored seating sprinkled throughout the room was the perfect way to add a funky feel to the studio. Picture props and photo opps were abundant—from an old-school chalkboard to a handcrafted wooden sign of the event's hashtag.

The content was just as stellar as the venue with the founder of Origami Owl, Bella Weems sharing how she started her business at 14 years old because her parents wouldn't buy her a car. It skyrocketed from there, and now at 19 years old she's a powerful young business-woman.

At the end of it all, of course, there was the swag: a bag boasting of gifts from Be You Jewelry, The Silver Wren, Zenned Out Jewelry, Happy Hands, Eva NYC, and Kendra Scott, to name a few.

Bloguettes' workshops are held in various locations nationwide throughout the year. In addition to workshops, you can find loads of helpful information on their blog or become a member of the Bloguettes community to get access to all the tools, educational resources, and networking opportunities your brand needs to take on the entrepreneurial age! [🔗](#)

FIND MORE ABOUT BLOGUETTES AT:
WWW.BLOGUETTES.COM • [@BLOGUETTES](https://www.instagram.com/bloguettes)

PHOTOS BLOGUETTES



“The Bloquettes Phoenix Workshop was exactly what I needed. A room filled with creative, like minded individuals forces you to get out of your comfort zone and network with really inspiring people. I would highly recommend this workshop to anyone who may be looking for that extra push in their own business or brand.”

LEAH THEODOSIS





“I just adore the Bloquettes workshop. It was truly the jumpstart I needed to help me finish my personal blog and personal website. Getting to meet so many amazing young entrepreneurs and business owners was my favorite.”

CHRISTINE TETREALT





Let's Get Social

WITH SOCIAL STUDIO + GET IT DONE GALS



Jessica Howell

Jessica is the CEO and founder of Social Studio Shop. Through their workshops and consulting sessions, Social Studio Shop helps entrepreneurs and bloggers bring intention to the online space by cultivating authentic relationships and building purpose-driven strategies. Jessica contributes to various blogs and is constantly sharing tips on social media marketing. Besides all things social, she has a sweet spot for her hubby, their pup Gracie, coffee (lots of it!), and experiencing all that life has to offer.



Lindsey Morando and Nicole Lombardo

Lindsey Morando and Nicole Lombardo are marketing mavens on a mission: to help women entrepreneurs get clear, get strategic and get moving where their online businesses are concerned! With over 20 years combined strategic marketing experience between them, the Co-Op Gals earned their chops leading marketing teams that have built multi-million dollar businesses and brands including Lulu Lemon, Sharkeez, Sheila Kelley's S-Factor, Fitness Quest 10, Midrange 7 and Lusso Bags. Since starting the Marketing Co-Op, Lindsey and Nicole have helped dozens of coaches and service-based entrepreneurs all over the world take their online businesses from fledgling to five-figure-a-month fast. The Co-Op Gals have been featured in print publications including In Touch Weekly, San Diego Magazine and D List Magazine, and online at Female Entrepreneur Association, YFS Magazine, Entrepreneur on Fire and The Suitcase Entrepreneur.

It's no secret that networking is essential for all entrepreneurs. There are a lot of opportunities to choose from, but sometimes the more intimate settings provide the most benefit. Such was the mastermind workshop hosted by Social Studio Shop and get it done gals (Marketing Co-op) with the mission of bringing together an inspiring and empowering group of female entrepreneurs in the San Diego community.

The Hera Hub, a local female entrepreneur co-op working and meeting space in San Diego, provided a wide open space, which allowed for the hosts to design the evening to fit their goals: to not only allow a room for like-minds to connect but to also facilitate potential projects, collaborations and opportunities. They designed the event for everyone, from those that love networking to those that want to hide in a corner (or in the bathroom) when they hear the word networking. There was no hiding; the intimate environment made it relaxed so it was simple to connect with other female entrepreneurs. Even the shyest of women were able to meet other fabulous ladies.

Guests were tagged when they walked in with personalized, hand-made pins (Brittani Rose Paper) before they were invited to gather around tables decorated with florals (Blue Ladder Botany) and candles (Calypso Candles) which set the stage for a collaborative vibe. The hosts made it a priority to match-make and connect ladies who they thought would be a good fit for one another. Brand specialists, photographers, designers, creatives and entrepreneurs mingled together for meaningful discussion with facilitating questions such as, "What challenges are you currently facing," and "What is currently working in your business?" These questions sparked the dialogue and allowed the ladies to support one another and gain first-hand knowledge from each other.

To give you a taste of the workshop, Social Studio Shop and get it done gals created a worksheet for us to share that they hope will facilitate deliberate thinking and planning for the entrepreneur. [🔗](#)

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PHOTOS CAVIN ELIZABETH PHOTOGRAPHY

Inspire. Connect. Grow.

CREATE YOUR OWN MINI MASTERMIND GROUP!

Get together with your favorite creative gal pals at a local coffee shop or co-working space and work through these questions together. You can even host a virtual coffee date if you can't meet in person!

Questions take turns asking these questions aloud with the group

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

WHO CAN I (WE) SEND YOUR WAY? WHO DO YOU ABSOLUTELY LOVE TO WORK WITH?

WHAT IS WORKING IN YOUR BUSINESS THAT HAS HELPED YOU GROW?

WHAT ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH?

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO CONNECT WITH YOU?

EMAIL

PHONE

SOCIAL

Notes



Next Issue

**DON'T MISS ISSUE FOUR
RELEASING THE END OF JUNE 2016!**

featuring:

- / MINTED's Arist Community
- / Hayley Morgan and Jess Connolly - Wild & Free Book and Influence Network
- From Blog to Book + From Blog to Business
- Style Yourself





Gather

Workshop

WITH KAITIE BRYANT + MATTIE TIEGREEN





“I absolutely loved my experience at Gather. I was blown away by the care that was taken to make each of us feel special. From the intentionality behind where we sat, the carefully crafted breakfast, swag bags, to knowing us by name and the lengthy head shots session... it felt like a personalized experience. I just loved it.”

TIFFANY

Gather is a 2-day creative conference designed to educate and empower the creative business woman. Because of its small size (22 attendees at each event), Gather is an intimate setting that provides a safe place to share fears and excitement, discuss and grow, and create a genuine community of women who are with and for you. The weekend is a perfect balance of tips and practical resources to grow your business and inspiration and encouragement to keep going. We've found that speaking to women candidly about our business stories can be just as helpful as a list of action steps—so we do both!

Gather is held at Foster, a bright, beautiful co-working space in the adorably walkable Virginia-Highland area of Atlanta. Our mission is simply to support small business owners and renting Foster's space for our events does just that. We host speakers from all over the country to present on finances, branding, business boundaries, organization, social media, creative inspiration and more. Not only are these women at the forefront of their creative fields, they share their hearts openly with our attendees and love us well throughout the entire planning process. We're lucky to do business alongside them and blessed to call them friends. Alongside the founders, Kaitie Bryant and Mattie Tiegreen, speakers have been/will be: Britt Bass, Hilary Maloney, Shanna Skidmore, Paige French, Mica May, Tonya Dalton, Ashley Buzzy, Jenn Gietzen, Haley Sheffield, Anna Liesemeyer, Savannah Wallace and Callie Murray.

Our main goal is to create a genuine and safe space to be exactly who you are. Whether it's just starting out in the creative industry, or years down the road with a need to re-focus, we want to bring women together to share their reality and grow from where they are. We do spend a great deal of time working through specific business topics like branding, marketing and finances, but at the end of the two days, our hope is that our attendees have become our friends and that they have a newfound confidence in the reality and importance of their work. We promise that you will walk away from Gather with a fresh perspective on the different areas of your business, a confidence in where you are excelling and action steps for places that need growth. You won't encounter judgment, business/creative “jargon” or lectures, but instead spend two days with women who believe in you and what you have to offer (and make new friends you'll continue to work with after Gather)! [🔗](#)



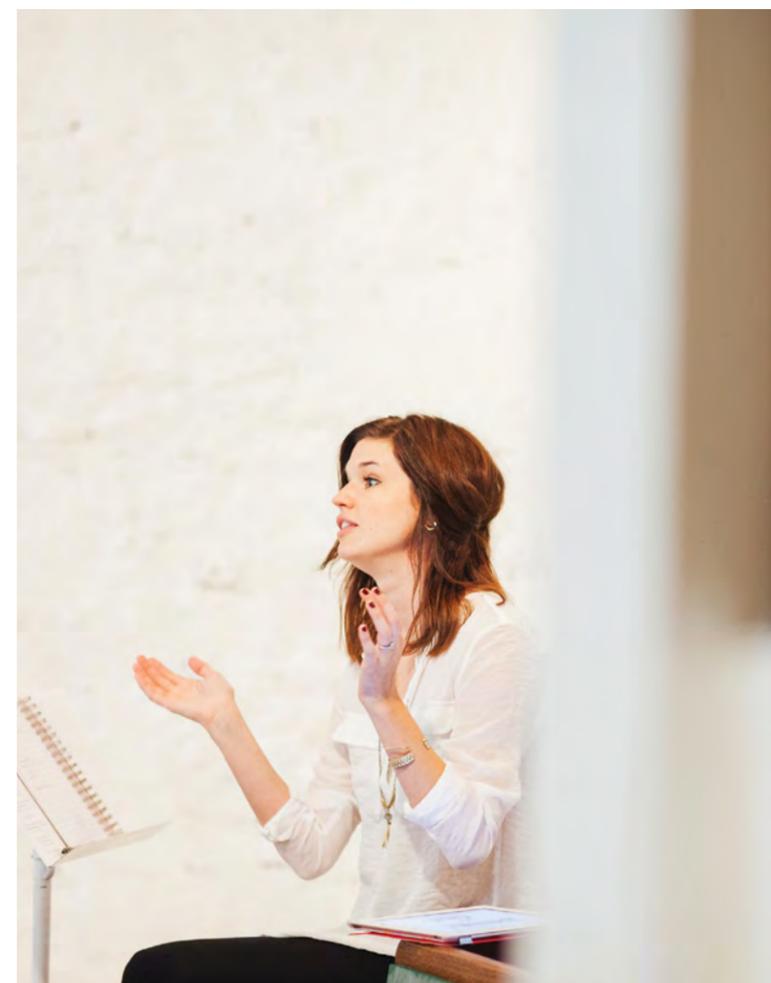
about

Kaitie Bryant + Mattie Tiegreen, Founders

Kaitie Bryant is a photographer with a passion for heart sunglasses, genuine people, developing creative ideas and lively photographs. She lives in Athens, Georgia with her husband and two energetic boys and loves capturing life with her camera. www.kaitiebryant.com

Mattie Tiegreen is a graphic designer with a passion for clean design, house plants, ice cream sandwiches and loving on people. She lives in Raleigh, North Carolina with her husband and two rascally pups and loves creating business identities, patterns and letters. www.greentiestudio.com

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“Gather is a breath of fresh air. The community, the truths, the inspiration and the encouragement that you leave Gather with are priceless. This was the best investment I could have ever made, not only for my business but for myself as a person.”

JESSY





Q&A WITH JACLYN CARLSON

The Blog Society



Jaclyn Carlson Founder & CEO, Blog Society

Originally from Boston, Jaclyn is the found of Blog Society, a global community where blogging, business and creativity collide. A passionate creative matchmaker, she is a social media addict prone to wasting hours on Pinterest and has had a long love affair with the digital marketing world. She believes in the power of collaboration and has a passion for helping businesses and bloggers tell their brand story. She aims to offer like-minded and passionate individuals the opportunity to connect and inspire one another through her Digital Bravery E-course and a variety of national workshops, events and gatherings both online and off.

Tell us a little bit about you.

I'm originally from Boston, MA but now call Sydney home. I've always harbored a love for bringing people together, so at heart I'm a creative matchmaker. By trade I'm a marketer, blogger and entrepreneur. I thrive on empowering and inspiring creatives around the globe through e-courses, workshops, events and blogging via my business Blog Society.

I believe in showing up each day, pushing through the struggle and having the courage to dream big. The most proud moments are often the most mundane but also the most rewarding. There is also nothing more rewarding than helping a fellow biz boss have that moment of clarity, that profound 'aha' moment that we all crave as creatives.

What is the idea behind Blog Society?

For me the idea has always been bubbling under the surface. Looking back now and tracking the seed of the idea, it started well before I moved to Australia in late 2007. The truth is, I first started blogging way back in 2005. I'd been travelling in Europe at the time and had written my first blog on my adventures. In hindsight, I wish that I had kept that blog going because, of course, back then it was a really rare thing. If only I had known that the blogging world was just going to explode!

Years later, I found myself in Australia. I finally started my own personal blog again and truthfully fell in love all over with the blogging world, the creative space it offered and the amazing people I met. It was those connections that really got me thinking.

PHOTOS LUISA BRIMBLE & GRACE ALYSSA KYO

I remember taking Holly Beckor from Decor8's course and was filled with so much inspiration by her story that I just KNEW I had to bring this idea, still bubbling away under the surface, to reality. That idea was Blog Society. Finally, in 2013, I decided that I wanted to expand upon that and create a business focused community called Blog Society. We started with an Instagram feed, and our first event was a collaboration with Kinfolk Magazine. It's been going strong ever since. We've expanded into the global market and never looked back.

What do you offer bloggers and creative business owners?

The mix of Blog Society offerings continues to expand and grow. At our core, we offer a voice and platform to a global and growing blogging and creative business community. Through our blog, we educate and inspire through fresh, free content, and our suite of creative events (thus far Australian based but we are looking to expand into the US this year) bring these experiences to life and embraces the value of face to face connection. Outside of this, our most popular product is our flagship, digital marketing e-course called Digital Bravery. Designed especially for bloggers or for creative entrepreneurs just starting their journey, we offer a self-paced, 6 week online course to build confidence and gain clarity around the worlds of digital marketing and social media. We've had hundreds of students graduate from our course.



Who else makes up Blog Society, and how does this structure support your business model?

Currently, I run the business by myself and have just brought on two interns to help with some of the admin and execution work. But so far, it's been just me and some wonderfully supportive fellow women biz owners that I rely on for advice and support.

What has been some of the greatest challenges you've faced and some of the more prouder moments?

Balance and working full time and running a profitable business are a constant juggling act at the moment. Some of the most proud milestones have been seeing my ideas turn into reality – the launch of our e-course, speaking at Alt Summit and seeing our events come to life.

Tell us about your mission or what is at the heart of Blog Society?

At the very heart of Blog Society lies the power of connection. I have built my business around the need of belonging and our inherent desire to reach and meet others with shared beliefs. Through the development of technology and the growth of social media, cross-border collaboration is no longer an obstacle, but rather an opportunity. Never before have we been able to expand our social and professional circles in the way we can today. This opens up unprecedented opportunities for connection and collaboration which is where Blog Society steps in to help facilitate those dreams. Our audience extends far beyond just the world of blogging and includes the vast audience of female entrepreneurs navigating their creative dreams. I'm so proud of the way our community has expanded in such a short time and only hope to continue on this growth trajectory by strengthening our ties and our overall presence in other countries.

What are 3 pieces of advice you'd give to newbie bloggers?

Ahh... so many lessons learned over the years, but if I had to narrow it down to three, they'd go like this...the first one is important so pay attention! Just start – that is the BEST piece of advice I can give you, followed by always surrounding yourself with those that want to lift you higher and, finally, that relationships are always more important than numbers. ☺

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The Blueprint Retreat

WITH SHANNA SKIDMORE



The Blueprint Retreat is held annually in November. Though the location changes every two years, the 2015 and 2016 Blueprint Retreats find their home at Anchorage 1770, an inn located in Beaufort, South Carolina.

The retreat is led by founder Shanna Skidmore with the creative input of Abany Bauer (art direction) and Haley Sheffield (photography). The typical attendee is a female, creative entrepreneur looking to take a break to better her business.

The retreat is a time to create a blueprint (plan) for the upcoming year by intentionally setting goals in the areas of finance, personal, professional, etc. Attendees come ready to design a business intentionally, grow scalability and sustainability and, the old cliché, “work smarter not harder.”



Shanna Skidmore, founder of The Blueprint Retreat

Shanna Skidmore is a business strategist and financial coach. Nicknamed the “dream-releaser” by her clients, she helps entrepreneurs make money doing what they love by building profitable & sustainable businesses. For the past 10 years she has been immersed in the world of small business development and finance. By studying patterns of success, she now coaches and consults with creative entrepreneurs on business principles she found to be key indicators of success. Her background in finance, psychology and art, have allowed her to marry the world of business and creativity. Her greatest joy is watching others transform their stories and build businesses & lives they love! Shanna resides in the southeast with her husband, Kyle, and Siberian husky pup, Sadie.

I sat in a room full of men ready to share my big dreams for the upcoming year. I had everything laid out in my pink binder broken down by multi-colored tabs labeled “personal,” “professional,” “financial” and so on.

Annual planning was something ingrained in my business journey from day one, but coming from a financial background, it was much more about sales numbers and client acquisition and much less about living life on purpose and ways to love and serve others in a greater capacity. I stuck out from the pack from day one. Not only because my binder was pink in a room full of men, but my heart beat to a slightly different drum.

Fast forward to 2013. I had been out of the financial scene for about two years and was immersed in the creative business development world. I was pretty surprised to see how rare the practice of annual planning actually was. I thought everyone sat down and evaluated the highs and lows of the previous year, analyzed areas for improvement and mapped out action steps to achieve goals for the upcoming year. Nope! Turns out my financial background had ingrained in me a practice that was relatively unfamiliar to this world. I was grateful... and I wanted to instill the practice in others.

I officially launched my business consulting company for creative entrepreneurs and on the SAME DAY I launched the very first Blueprint Retreat (originally known as Inspire Conference). At that time, I think I had possibly 100 Instagram followers and a handful of Atlanta creatives that believed in my vision.

The first year we lost money. On paper, the retreat appeared to be a “failure.” In reality, it was everything but. It was perfect. For the first time, I felt so fully alive loving, encouraging and equipping others to live out their dreams. I was hooked.

The Blueprint Retreat retreat is designed as a time to get OUT of your business to work ON your business. So often we are drowning in the every day “to-dos” and it can feel impossible to get our heads above the water. This retreat is designed as oxygen for those lungs. A place to feel loved, cared for and to rest. A place to reignite those bigger dreams while also teaching and encouraging better business practices.

The Blueprint community has now grown to over seventy women and will host its fourth retreat this November. Even if the investment in time or money isn’t attainable for you to attend Blueprint this year, I encourage you to find your place, find your people, take time OUT of your business. Statistics show that more than half of all drownings occur less than 80 inches from safety. Reach out your hand; help is closer than you think.

Lysa Terkeurst says, “Just as our bodies need oxygen, our souls need truth flowing steadily in and out.”

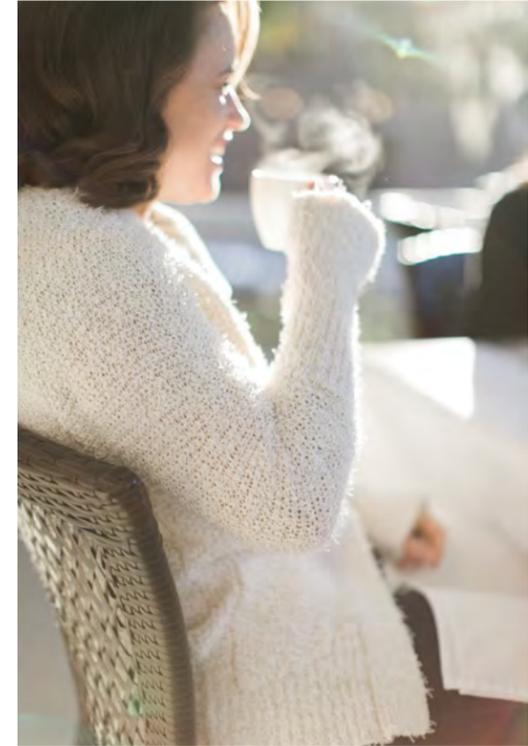
It’s okay to walk away and fill up those lungs every once and a while; it’s actually essential.

To deep breathing and restful living. 

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@SHANNASKIDMORE



PHOTOGRAPHY HALEY SHEFFIELD





／ **It's okay to walk away and fill up those lungs every once and a while; it's actually essential.**

SHANNA SKIDMORE





about the artist



Andrea Stenger

owner of Little Black Letter Company

Being creative is something I am passionate about and seems to bring out the best in me. When I first started calligraphy and lettering I found myself spending hours designing in the little spare bedroom of our condo. It wasn't until after a few projects and decorating our home with my work that I realized I was surrounded by a bunch of little black letters...and so Little Black Letter Company was founded. There is something so special in being able to express yourself through this type of visual, writing art.

I take pride in the fact that all of my work is designed and handwritten by myself. I offer an assortment of greeting cards and art prints but also love taking on a challenge through a variety of custom work and collaborations. I love making someone's thoughts come to life through the visual art of words and letters.

My work is structured to be simple, clean and authentic. I find inspiration through a variety of things, but ultimately it comes from my Savior, Jesus Christ. It is my desire to use my business as a way to say thank you to Him, show others how good He is, and as a way to connect with others in hopes to share the gospel.

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do not follow where
the path may lead.
go instead where there
is no path and
leave a trail



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